

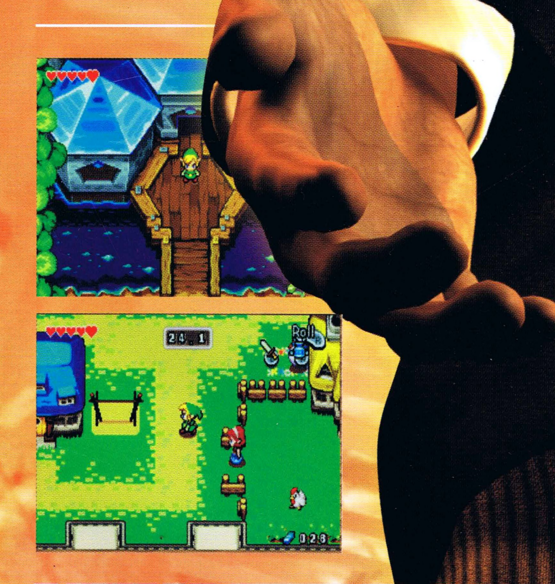
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■ THE REVOLUTIONARY SYSTEM ARRIVES!



MARIO POWER TENNIS

■ GAME, SET & MATCH TO NINTENDO – IT'S ANOTHER GAMECUBE SMASH!



NEW ZELDA!

■ BUT IS MINISH CAP AS GOOD AS A LINK TO THE PAST?

GOLDENEYE

WE PULL NO PUNCHES IN THE FIRST ROGUE AGENT REVIEW

METROID PRIME 2

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COMBAT LAPTOP FED.ISSUE 32

METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

Mission Launch
26.11.04

IT IS TIME SAMUS.
PREPARE WELL OR DIE ALONE.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

Technology Updates:

Light Beam
Fires beams of light to set your enemies on fire. Energizes light crystals to create protective domes.

Dark Beam
Effective against Light Aether enemies. Charge it to fire an entangler blast.

Annihilator Beam
Fires streams of energy that seek out multiple targets. Effective against Light and Dark enemies.

Space Jump Boots
Stay airborne for longer.

Dark Visor
See through Dark Aether's poisonous haze. An invaluable lifeline in total darkness.

Echo Visor
Detect and visualize enemy sound waves assaults.

BOUNTY HUNTER CHRONICLE
SAMUS ARAN
You are cordially invited to a
MULTIPLAYER
DEATH MATCH
Compete to the death with 3 other Bounty Hunters.
RSVP TXT

Mission file 02456: 30 days ago contact with galactic federation trooper squad Bravo was lost
Contract Agreement: Locate Federation Troopers and render assistance
Data Confirmation: Last transmission received from a rogue planet in the Dasha region called Aether_

Space Pirates Faction 1
Possessed by the Ing they have been equipped with upgrades to destroy you Samus.
- E Grenade Launchers
- Energy Scythes
- Oh and rather effective Boost Thrusters

A beautifully deadly arsenal I'm sure you'll agree Samus. Use the Dark Visor to spot them.

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Grenchler
Amphibious creature that kills with electricity.
Weak spot: Aim for the back of their shell.
Luminoth Faction 3
This mosquito type race is on the verge of extinction. The race was starting to flourish when a Phazeon meteor hit their planet creating two dimensions of Dark and Light. Samus, they are potential allies in the fight against the Ing Horde.
Ing Faction 2
These predatory arachnid type creatures cannot survive in the Light world. Their ingenious way round this is to possess Light World creatures. Say your prayers Samus and be vigilant. Their sole aim is to collapse the Light World and turn the whole planet into a Dark World.
Screw Attack
-High speed mobility mode
-Assault enemies in a whirl of energy
Federation Medical Report:
Samus Aran
Injury: Destruction of inner ear
Advice: If patient spent a little less time thinking she was invincible and a little more time using the Echo Visor she could avoid wasting Physician's time_
From. GalacticFed@corp.eternity
To. Samus@echoes.eternity
Prepare to meet thy shadow self.
Dark Samus, she is your nemesis.
Bounty Hunter Licence
Name: SAMUS ARAN
Occupation:
Bounty Hunter
Blood type: O-V64
Limb type: 446.9V
A2E2R1D253T6167IPS15
Nintendo
12+
PAL 60Hz ONLY
IMPORTANT: This game is only compatible with TVs which can support PAL 60Hz Mode.

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HE'S BEHIND YOU..!

Don't know who you've got treading the pantomime boards near you, but Bath Theatre Royal's production of Dick Whittington stars, in no particular order, Sid *'Riiiiickyy'* Owen and 'the amazing puppet act' Les Puppetiques En Noir. We've already booked our tickets, let us tell you. And it's got us thinking (not too hard) what a panto would be like with Shigeru Miyamoto calling the shots. The hero would dabble in ye olde plumbing, that's a given. He would also be a she (a SHE!), complete with clip-on moustache and magical banjo, on a journey to rescue a princess from the clutches of a giant dragon. Or is it a turtle? A 10-foot tall man-ogre provides the comic relief (by insisting on taking the names of everyone in the audience), as does a midget suspended above the stalls in a round pink marshmallow suit which gets blown apart and spattered over the children below during the interval. There'd never be a better time to go and see a pantomime!

Merry Christmas one and all!

Team NGC
NGC@futurenet.co.uk



TURN OVER THE PAGE!
To see how many great new games we've rammed into this very ***NGC****!*



TURN TO PAGE 8
To see the games crammed onto your free DVD!

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WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

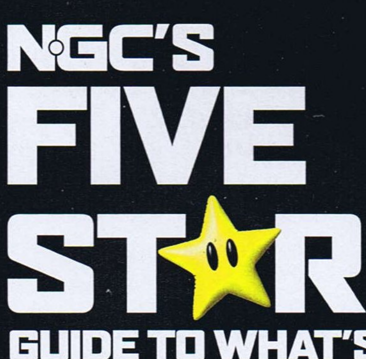
NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 12 years of Ninty love right there.



GUIDE TO WHAT'S **UNMISSABLE** THIS ISSUE!

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GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT
SATELLITE OF LOATHE
Like Sean Connery's Bond, some classics may never be equalled.

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METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
SAMUS BUT DIFFERENT
Pest control has arrived!

PAGE 36



Bad to the Bond...
All the best villains come out to play!





MEET ENJiKi
Enjiki adores Christmas, when her friends and fans shower her with gifts. Well, Pinkjiki usually buys her something, and she's generally able to steal a few of Geraint's spare presents. She hasn't quite cottoned on to the 'giving' side of things, mind you. The most she's given anyone is a big pile of wrapping paper, and that was to go in the bin.



DS OUT

THE REAL THING The games played! The controls tested! Find out whether your hopes have been realised.

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MARIO POWER TENNIS

THWOCK! That's an ace.

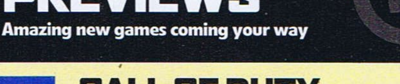
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MAWARU

TWISTY! Proof that innovative controls aren't just for DS – check out Wario's motion-sensitive minigames.

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Enough to keep you busy for weeks…



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You don't need the Enigma machine to decode how good this is looking.

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Bring back the monkey!

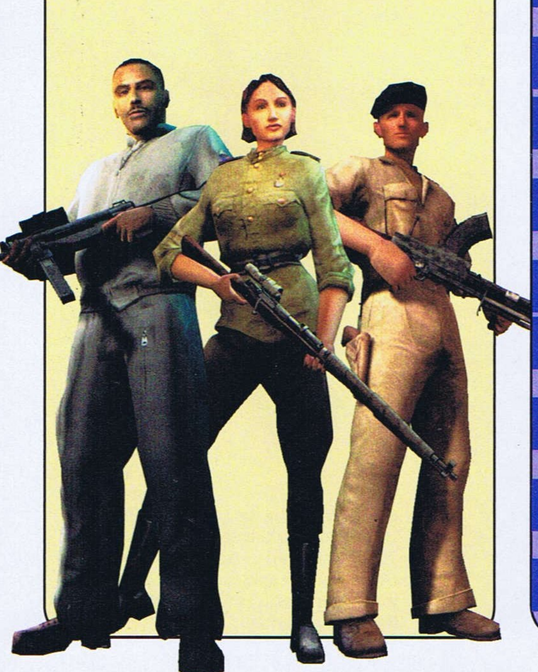
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Football the way no-one plays it.

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The latest rumours, truths and goings-on

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Every forthcoming titles for the UK, plus the biggest new releases for the United States and Japan.

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Get every Star Piece in the game and buy those badges!

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One of 2005's biggest games…

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Adding two and two to make 'love'. Plus the results of her rune reading.

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This year's swingin' *Spider-Man 2*. But who burst open Spidey's skull?

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Re-arranged and improved to feature the essential 100 GC games.

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I want, I want, I want… *sheesh!*

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Ways to blow your hard-earned cash

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Leave your integrity at the door – life's one long popularity contest.

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When other heroines fail us, Samus just keeps on shining. What a girl!

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Dragons may be legendary, yet Spyro's games are anything but.

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Incredible by name, tediously average platformer by nature. As expected.

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The full version of Link's ever decreasing adventure arrives.

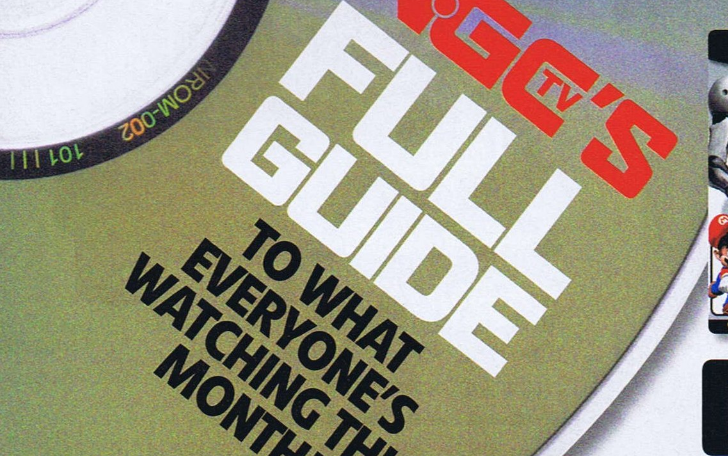
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What was it that made Kittsy so angry he broke a wavebird? Find out!

70 **KURURIN SQUASH**
Small duck-thing flies a spinning stick round hazards. Yes, it *is* from Japan.

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The great ape gets a second helping of pop songs and anime tunes in Japan.

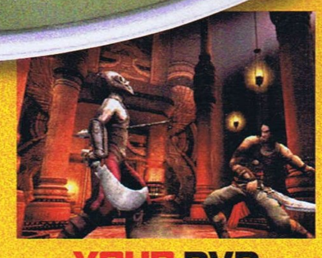




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- Bonus features section with even more games!
- Everything you need!

ON THE DVD

EVERY NEW GAME THAT MATTERS - RIGHT HERE!



YOUR DVD CONTENTS

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES

Scan, scan, scan, as fast as you can... Yes, she's back! And so is he! You know... Geraint! (He's the 'he', by the way.) Back with a tantalising glimpse of Nintendo's big Christmas hope. We reveal some cracking new scenes from the single-player game (Dark Samus, some unseen boss encounters...), as well as a choice selection of Bounty mode and Deathmatch multiplayer battles. Let our footage get you in the mood, then leg it down your local games shop (phew – almost said 'emporium' there...). The full game's out right about now...

GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

Read our review this issue, then take a look at some carefully chosen examples of the kind of action the game has to offer on our DVD. As well as extracts from the story mode, we've captured some four-player carnage (Jes, who played through the game for our review, is in the top-left of the screen – and he clearly has an advantage).

MARIO POWER TENNIS

Intro and in-game footage cut together to form a hard-hitting new trailer. We've reviewed the Japanese version elsewhere this issue – and we love it. Watch us show off some of the game's finer points...

CHRISTMAS TOP 10

The games we reckon you should be asking for this Christmas – and they haven't all been released in the past two weeks...

BONUS FEATURES

Mawaru Made in Wario (GBA)
Kururin Squash
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within
Viewtiful Joe 2

MAKES OTHER DISCS LOOK SMALL AND INADEQUATE, DOESN'T IT?



SMASH HIT!

The most realistic sports game on Gamecube? Yes! Sorry, we mean No! But who cares? *Mario Power Tennis* delivers fun by the ton.



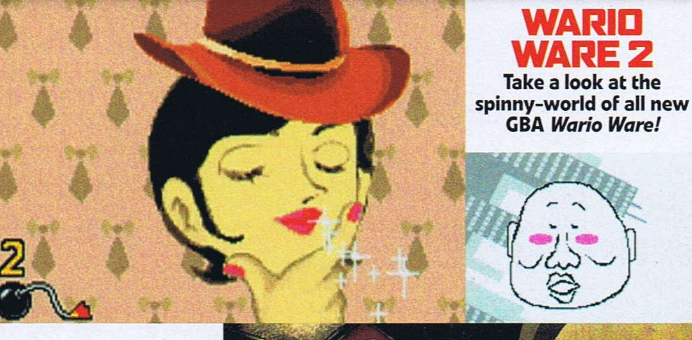


YOU NEED METROID

And you need to see Dark Samus and some of the bosses to believe them. Feast your peepers!



MORE IN-GAME ACTION THAN ANYONE ELSE!



WARIO WARE 2

Take a look at the spinny-world of all new GBA *Wario Ware!*

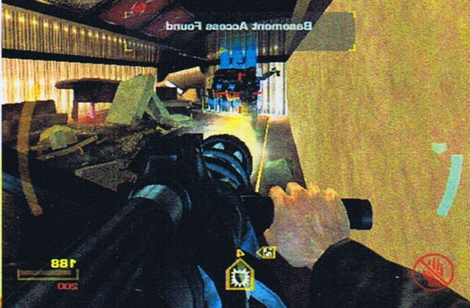


GOLDEN OLDIE?

See if *Rogue Agent* lives up to the name...









EASY DVD

Navigating your DVD couldn't be simpler. You'll see the main three games waiting for you – highlight them to be taken to their own menus. There's also an extra section full of other titles. Fancy seeing it all in one non-stop session? There's even an option to do that...

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NEWSDESK





LET BATTLE COMMENCE!

NINTENDO AND SONY THROW THEIR TOYS OUT OF THE PRAM. AGAIN.

The gloves, as they say, have come off. With Nintendo having finalised details of their US and Japanese DS launch, Sony were left to bring up the rear with their own launch announcement for PSP in Japan.

With PSP set for release on the 12th of December and priced at an aggressive ¥20,790 (which works out just shy of £110), both the early street date and the low pricing have come as a bit of a surprise, meaning it poses perhaps a greater threat to Nintendo than we first envisioned.

As expected, Nintendo shrugged off the news. Their spokesman Yashiro Minigawa, speaking to financial magazine and website publishers Bloomberg, dismissed it, saying, "That's not a game machine. They [Sony] showed it at the Tokyo Game Show without any games. You can tell it's not finished." This comment was countered by Sony head Ken Kutaragi. "People who want to play with Pikachu will need a DS – but those who want *Gran Turismo* will need a PSP." Not wanting to be outdone, Microsoft's Peter Moore offered his tuppence-worth comparing Sony's PSP to a "little operating system" trying to "challenge Windows". Unconfirmed reports state that after these comments, all parties had to retrieve the lipstick that had fallen out of their handbags – mumbling something about 'hair pulling' and how 'fat' the others were.

Silly comments aside, though, Sony are still the company with everything to



SOLD OUT?!

It seems DS is doing a roaring trade in pre-orders at the moment, with many online importers having to refuse orders as they won't have enough units to meet demand. The same is true in the States, with DS units already totally accounted for in some stores.

Such is the rate of pre-orders, Japan has reported that, even though the machine is not due on sale for another week, DS is already the third-highest selling console, just ahead of the redesigned 'PStwo' and the Gamecube. Hopefully, DS will will be able to continue the momentum right the way through the new year as more and more people get the opportunity to actually try playing with the unit for themselves.



UK LAUNCH PRICE?

THOSE RUMOURED EUROPEAN LAUNCH DETAILS…





The gossip currently being bandied about is that DS will launch here for £129.99 – a reasonably respectable figure, but still a substantial mark-up on import prices. Which leads us to believe the rumour isn't entirely correct - especially when you consider that, at around £80 to import, the DS will be significantly cheaper to import, even *after* import taxt/duty – whatever.

On the plus side, though, speculation points towards a possible catalogue of 20-25 games at DS's launch, increasing to around 50 just weeks after launch. Nothing's actually confirmed as yet, though – we'll be first to let you know…

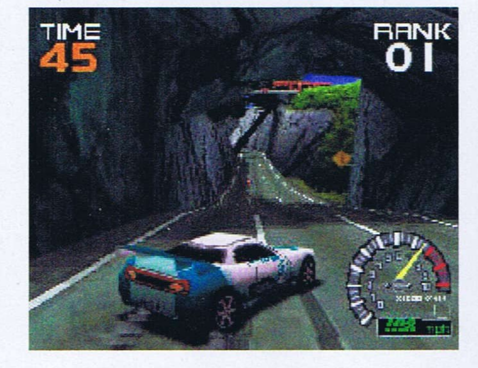
SHORT CUTS



IMPORT FRIENDLY

Typically, just after we went to press last month we received news that there would be no region lockout on the DS units – which means that any game will work on any DS unit regardless of which territory you bought it from. This is especially good news for anyone who wanted to import one in time for Christmas.

Even better news is that the power adaptor for DS is exactly the same as that used for GBA SP – so if you do import your DS and already have an SP, you won't need to fork out more cash for a bulky step-down convertor.







prove. Nintendo have a good month's head start over their adversary, the price is attractive and there are hardly *any* questions left that need answering. People have played with DS and they've seen (and liked) the games on the horizon. Conversely, some of PSP's specifics remain unclear. Sony have promised a four- to six-hour battery life for gaming, for example, but Ken Kutaragi has since stated that more graphically intensive games (ie any games that aren't puzzlers) will drain the battery further – sparking rumours that the battery life on early PSP models may well be closer to the couple of hours originally bandied about.

It's fair to say that, for a change, Nintendo are the ones doing everything right with DS's launch. They've got the machine out and ready in just over a year after the initial announcement, they've got a raft of strong third party developers and are well placed reinforce their position as the dominant force in the handheld market.

RELEASE LIST NEW AND UPDATED!

Some idiot* made a slight boo-boo with last issue's DS release list. Here's the correct one – the US titles are all out now, the Japanese ones on 2nd December…

JAPAN

Mario 64 DS
Sawaru! Made in Wario
Pokémon Dash
Daigosso! Band Brothers
Chokkan Hitofude (One Touch Puzzle)
Cool 104 Joker and Setline
The Urbz: Sims in the City
Majhong Taikai
Zoo Keeper
Kenshuui Tendo Dokuta
Kimi no tame nara Shineru (Feel the Magic XX/XY)
Mr Driller Spirits

USA

Asphalt Urban GT
Feel the Magic: XY/XX
Madden NFL 2005
Metroid Prime: Hunters (demo bundled with the DS)
Mr. Driller Drill Spirits
Ping Pals
Rayman DS
Ridge Racer DS
Spider-Man 2
Super Mario 64 DS
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005
The Urbz: Sims in the City

* We'll give you a clue. His name rhymes with 'Paul Edwards'… oops…



SUPER MARIO 64 DS

IMPRESSIONS AFTER OUR EXTENSIVE HANDS-ON…

Δ New characters add an extra dimension.



Δ The minigames help bolster an already impressive package.



Δ We can't say we're too impressed with the way the game handles.



Δ You certainly can't argue with four-player battles in *64's* worlds. This bonus will prove a favourite for many months.

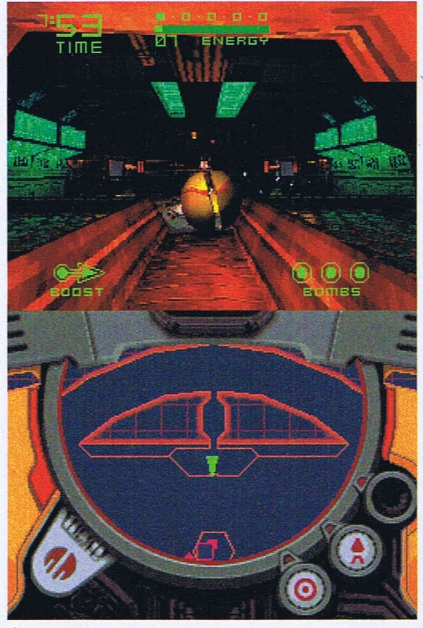


What's the first thing you do when you boot up *Super Mario 64?* Triple-jump straight to the first tree and fire off a stylin' dismount? Waterbomb the pond with a huge diving attack? Whatever it is, it'll be the first thing you do when you get your hands on *Mario 64 DS* – the conversion is that close. The world is almost exactly as you remember, and Nintendo have been incredibly inventive in converting the original controls to fit DS's digital set-up.

Nevertheless, controlling Mario on the D-pad is a cramped and frustrating business. Weirdly, someone decided to have the default movement mode as walk, so if you want Mario to run – and when don't you want Mario to run? – you'll need to hold down Y *all the time.* The touch-screen method is much better. Drag the stylus over the screen and he'll run where you point, with the d-pad acting as button controls for jumping and attacking. You can centre the camera using the L shoulder button in both cases.

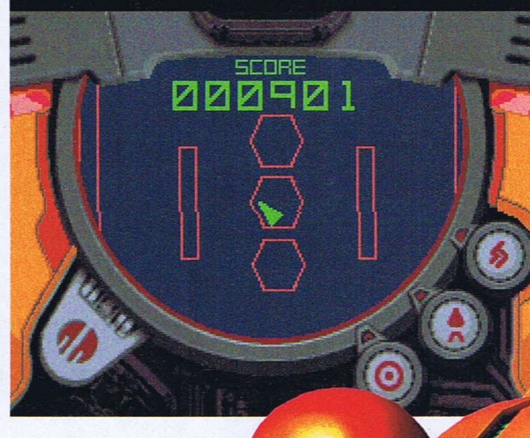
It's a noble effort, but it still doesn't disguise the fact that this is a world where you're used to perfect controls and DS can't deliver them – not on this game, at least. Consequently, the game's been re-jigged to cope with its clumsier inhabitants. For once it's Mario who's got himself kidnapped, along with Luigi and Wario, so it's down to Yoshi – complete with hover jump – to save the day by finding all those familiar stars. Until he rescues his friends he can impersonate them (and their special skills – like Luigi's spin jump from *Superstar Saga*) by finding their caps, but take a hit and he reverts to dino form. There are new levels, and 30 new stars to find, but we've a feeling that this won't be as classic an experience as the original.

Disappointed? Don't be. The main game is only a third of what's on offer. The wireless multiplayer mode is already shaping up to be damn good fun, but the real peach is the suite of 30 touchscreen minigames. Inspired by *Wario Ware*, these are a different breed – more elaborate and sophisticated – but just as brain-drainingly, tongue-curlingly addictive. From what we've played, the game would be worth buying for these alone.





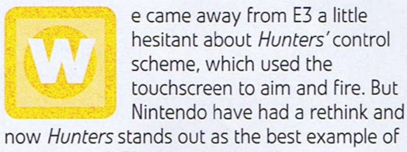




△ **Static screens don't really do the game justice – the movement is so quick and velvety smooth.**

METROID PRIME HUNTERS FIRST HUNT

IT'S BEEN VASTLY IMPROVED – AND IT'S FREE!



We came away from E3 a little hesitant about *Hunters'* control scheme, which used the touchscreen to aim and fire. But Nintendo have had a rethink and now *Hunters* stands out as the best example of just how well 3D games will work on the system.

It's become a true FPS, with the stylus being used in the same way the mouse is in PC shooters. Use it to look around, and then fire with the L shoulder button. Strafing is handled on the D-pad and jumping requires a nifty double-tap. It's an extremely convincing solution, although you may find yourself balancing your DS on your right pinkie in order to ensure maximum stylus control.

First Hunt is the free demo which will ship with all DSs sold – the full game won't be ready until 2005. And for your £0.00 you get one Bowser of a bargain. For solo players there are three training-style levels. The first is simply target practice, as you move and shoot around a simple level. The second is a sort of Survival mode, where your job is just to stay alive as the enemies rack up against you. The third is what can only be described as a morph ball race track. It's pretty basic, but shaving seconds off your time gives you a solid incentive for return visits.

The point of the demo, however, is to show off DS's wireless capabilities, and the multiplayer maps do this brilliantly. Setting up a match is dead easy, and there are levels designed for two-, three- and four-player battles. No-one knows yet exactly what options will be available, but it looks like it might take its inspiration from the deathmatches in *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*. Items like the double-damage make an appearance, alongside old favourites like the morph ball and super rockets.

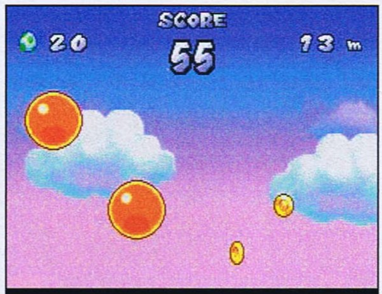
"CHALLENGE EVERY SINGLE DS OWNER YOU MEET TO A QUICK DEATHMATCH"

Hunters could hardly be more important for Nintendo, and for the DS, and it looks like it will deliver on every front. It look luscious, from the dramatic split-screen opening movie to the hazy detail in the environments. Knowing that you'll be able to challenge every single DS owner you meet to a quick deathmatch, means that everyone will be honing their skills. This is the anti-*PictoChat*, and it's going to guarantee that DSs airwaves are used as much for vicious competition as for loved-up communication.



YOSHI'S TOUCH AND GO



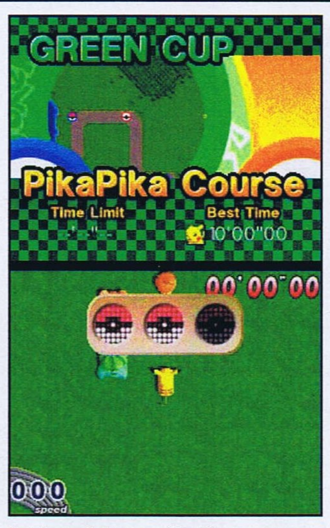




Taking on the adorable stylings of the *Yoshi's Island* games, this is a platform game with an extraordinary twist – there aren't any platforms! Not until you draw them on the screen with your stylus, at any rate.

Only two levels were available for us to play, but we played them eight times each. Sketching out the perfect route requires quick fingers and a quicker mind, and aiming for perfection keeps you coming back again and again. If the rest of *Touch and Go* can match up to the delight of what we've seen so far, DS has its first unquestionable classic.

POKÉMON DASH





Pokémon Drat, more like. This is a strong contender for the DS's wooden spoon. Scrub with the stylus to make Pikachu gallop lumpily through monotonous forests. Occasionally you'll find a hot air balloon and a shortcut to some more monotonous forest. Hopefully, it's a game with hidden depths, but never has a piece of Pokémon merchandise had less charisma.

MR DRILLER DRILL SPIRITS

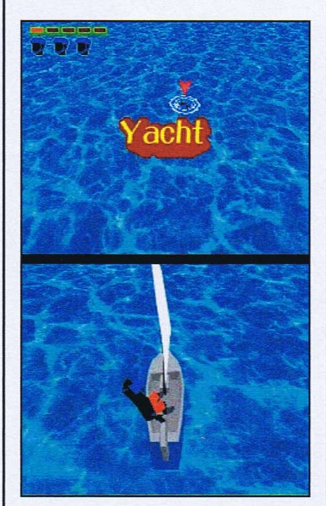




Forget 3D, forget 2D, *Mr Driller* has always been a one-dimensional game and that dimension is 'down'. Consequently, he's perfectly at home on DS where he can burrow down through the bottom screen as blocks tower above him on the top screen. As well as the classic control system, you can use the stylus to point on the blocks you want him to obliterate. There's never been a bad Mr Driller game, and that isn't about to change.

FEEL THE MAGIC: XX/XY

Even if they'd forgotten to stick in any real storyline, Sega's *Wario Ware*-inspired dating game would be worth picking up just for its style. No game on any system has ever has looked this sharp. And whether you're picking scorpions off the girl you desire or huffing into the microphone to blow out candles on her cake, you're left in no doubt that *Feel The Magic* intends to exploit DS's technical qualities to the full.





JAM WITH THE BAND



Reckon *Donkey Konga*'s a bit simple? How about an eight-player, full harmony music game, where you can edit your own tracks and record new vocal samples through DS's microphone? The game itself is pretty clumsy looking, and the gameplay mostly boils down to pressing that one button when you're told to, but its possibilities are almost endless. You'll want to make sure you have your headphones with you, though.



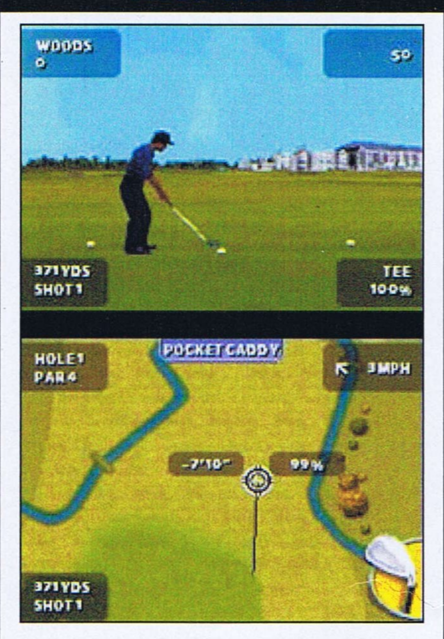
WARIO WARE INC.

It was only ever going to be brilliant. All new, but all instantly familiar, the sports games, the cat games, the toilet paper games and the vegetable games are just as irresistible as they ever were, only now they're twice as instinctive. All are controlled with the stylus, and each task has its own absurd logic. Wario always was a hands-on kind of chap – DS is where he's belonged all along.





TIGER WOODS



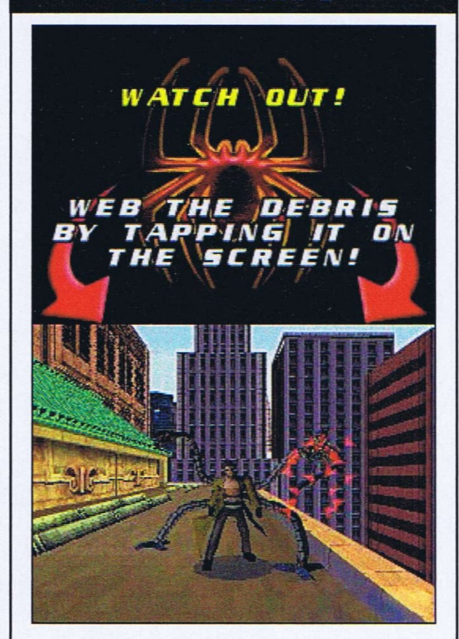
If you know anyone who still can't see the point in having two screens, send them *Tiger's* way. The bottom screen has a top-down, 2D map of each hole. Use the stylus to move around it, and the top screen tracks your movement, showing you the terrain you're pointing to in 3D close-up. Then use the touchscreen to stroke your way through each stroke with analogue perfection. The Create-a-Golfer mode is looking pretty ropy, but other than that this looks a strong title.

SPRUNG

Or is it *Crush*? When a game keeps changing its name, and when both names are plainly silly, you know you've got a dodgy one. Little wonder. *Sprung* is a dating game which requires you to choose between conversational gambits in the hope of wowing and then wooing the ladies. Curiosity will keep you going for a level or two, and then you'll start to notice that all the conversations go in circles and what you say doesn't matter. Chalk one up for realism in games, then.



SPIDER-MAN 2



We already knew that DS was backwards compatible, but we hadn't realised that there was another crafty way of getting GBA games to play on the new handheld. All you have to do is squeeze them onto a DS card and call them a launch game. It may do little to capitalise on DS's abilities, but *Spider-Man 2* still looks classy. A scrolling platform/adventure/beat-'em-up, it perfectly recreates the speed and freedom of Peter Parker's other life.

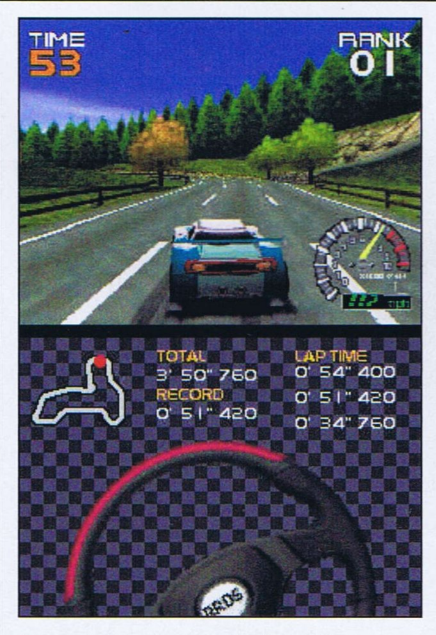
PING PALS

Part Tamagotchi, part *PictoChat* clone, *PingPals* lets you type and scribble messages to your friends while customising a distressingly cute avatar.

The dressing-up options are plentiful, but it's more frustrating to use than *PictoChat* since the typing and drawing areas cramped by menu options. What's more, with its biggest competitor coming free with the hardware it's hard to believe there'll be many Pingers out there to be Pals with.



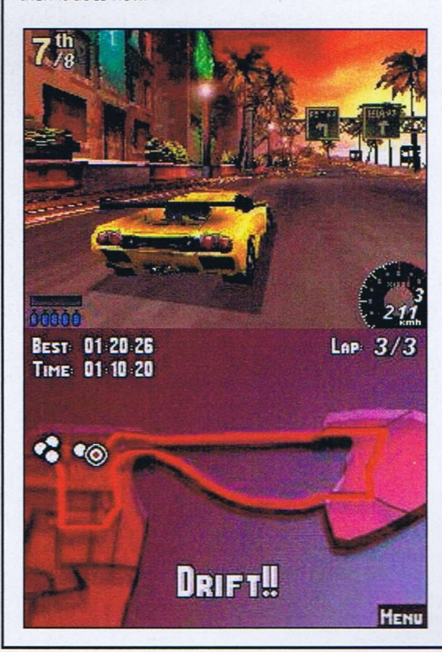
RIDGE RACER DS



This may be a loyal port of *Ridge Racer 64*, but you control it by turning the steering wheel with your stylus. Except you don't, because this was by far the weakest use of the touchscreen that we played. Fundamentally unusable, you'll resort to pressing directions in on the d-pad within seconds. Things work well enough once you do, but you still can't shake the feeling of playing a four-year-old relic rather than the future of racing games.

ASPHALT URBAN GT

Fast and slick, this was another racing title that didn't really know what to do with the second screen. The different vehicles on offer handled very differently to one another, and the track design was entertaining. The biggest let-down was the multiplayer wireless link-up, which was so buggy we couldn't manage to complete a race successfully. Once that little problem has been fixed, *Asphalt* will look a lot more promising than it does now.





ABOUT NINTENDO DS

THE MANUAL WE'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE...

- NINTENDO DS is a very complicated bit of kit. Don't lose it.
- NINTENDO DS is designed as a revolution in 'on the go' gaming. Got that? A revolution. 'On the go' gaming. Learn it and yell it at everyone you meet: it'll save us millions in marketing costs.
- Yes, left-handed players are screwed again.
- With the wireless gameplay functionality of NINTENDO DS, the dream of wandering fruitlessly around town for hours hoping to wander into the vicinity of another NINTENDO DS player is now reality!
- Look at how nice and silvery it is. Go on, stroke it. Nice and gentle now. Mmm.
- DS stands for 'Douglas Sinclair', the tiny little man inside the DS who controls everything.

1 USING YOUR NINTENDO DS

HARDWARE PRECAUTIONS / MAINTENANCE

NINTENDO DS is a state-of-the-art electronic consumer device which we've spent ages testing on monkeys in order to make sure idiots like you can't break it. But you are advised to follow the advice below to ensure your NINTENDO DS enjoys a long life (but not so long that you don't buy our next handheld, see).

- NINTENDO DS is NOT A TOY. Do not enjoy using it.
- Do not wedge NINTENDO DS inside a door and snap in half.
- Do not nudge strangers on buses, bring out your rare imported NINTENDO DS, then nod slowly while mouthing, "Oh, yeah."
- Take care not to activate wireless play near a cat or dog. It'll go *nuts*!
- NINTENDO DS Game Paks and accessories should be carefully and properly connected, and not, say, bunged in from the other side of the room. Would be cool, though.
- Just watch where you're going.

2 CARE FOR THE SCREEN

Please only use the official NINTENDO DS STYLUS and avoid third-party peripherals which may cause damage to our profits. The following objects must not be used instead of the stylus:

- A toothpick
- Your nose
- A felt-tip pen with the lid off
- A shard of glass
- Jam
- A lamppost

3 USING THE BUILT-IN PICTOCHAT SOFTWARE

Thousands of evil kids are waiting to beam unspeakably rude messages to your NINTENDO DS as soon as you're within range! You'll experience endless discomfort as you furtively try to work out which one of the little gits on the train is sending you hand-drawn pictures of things that are outlawed in 57 countries and not yet even invented in 15.

4 DISALLOWED IMAGES

The following images will be automatically blurred if you attempt to send them in a message to another NINTENDO DS owner using the in-built PictoChat software:

- Mario wearing a dunce's hat
- Shigeru Miyamoto and Hiroshi Yamauchi with a big love heart behind them and 'love eyes'
- Two oranges and a banana
- Yoshi with Y-fronts on

Please note that many images are copyrighted and may not be drawn without express permission from the copyright holder, including: banknotes, many works of art, complete books.

5 ACCESSORIES FOR YOUR NINTENDO DS

AVAILABLE NOW

DS BEAM (NDS-003) Projects a 100m-wide symbol onto the clouds, alerting DS users in the vicinity that you are available for wireless play. Design your own signal with the in-built *PictoChat* software, like the famous Batman logo*!
*Batman logo is TM & Copyright Warner Communications and must not be used as your DS BEAM signal.

REPLACEMENT STYLUS (NDS-002) Hehe. We're going to make a fortune on these.

WIRELESS ENHANCER (NDS-005) Enhance the speed and reliability of the wireless connection between two NINTENDO DS systems by connecting this 10cm-long cable between systems.

THIRD HAND (NDS-101) Designed for use where actually holding the NINTENDO DS while playing a game with the stylus is like spinning plates. Straps to waist (up to 42cm) and grips NINTENDO DS on left or right side, freeing your left or right hand for stylus use.

AVAILABLE IN 2006

THIRD SCREEN For use with the next exciting range of NINTENDO DS games, which will use the Third Screen to display system diagnostic icons, advertisements and the slowly rotating head of Reginald Fils-Aime.

THIRD EYE Complementing the Nintendo Third Screen, the Third Eye is designed for use where actually holding the NINTENDO DS while playing a game with the stylus and watching the third screen is like flying an aeroplane while juggling oranges with your feet.

AVAILABLE IN 2007

FOURTH SCREEN

TROUBLESHOOTING

Before bothering one of our service representatives, please use the section below to diagnose and solve any problems you may have with NINTENDO DS. Not that there will *be* any problems, of course. Just in case, you know.

Q. I cannot play mp3s/call my friends/ organise my calendar on the NINTENDO DS.
A. As Nintendo does not view competing portable entertainment devices as competitors, we left all these functions off. Or is it just that we *really* hate you?

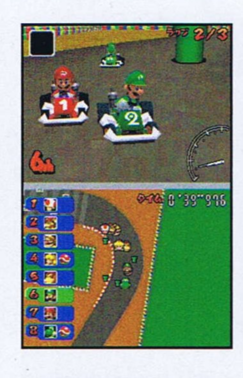
Q. Life with NINTENDO DS does not resemble your tediously inevitable 'lifestyle' TV advertising campaign that shows attractive people acting as though using NINTENDO DS is like some kind of New Year's Eve party.
A. During play, try getting a friend to dress up in a posh suit and hand you thousands of dollars from a briefcase marked "Marketing".

Q. NINTENDO DS doesn't fit into my pocket.
A. Buy bigger pockets. And it wouldn't hurt to shed a bit of that excess weight, either, thunderthighs.

Q. I can't turn the screenlights off to save the battery.
A. We will be launching a NINTENDO DS SP without the screenlights in 2006.

Q. Are there any secret NINTENDO DS functions not mentioned in the manual?
A. Yes, and here they are:

- **Switching on NINTENDO DS while holding down the A and B Buttons will revert the system exterior to the pre-release, E3 version.**
- **Pressing the Start and Select buttons together will immediately snap the unit's lid closed.**
- **The contrast of the built-in screen light can be adjusted by varying the angle at which your eyelids are open.**
- **Holding Select, X and Y and pressing Start will immediately call the police.**







ON THE HORIZON



THOSE RUMOURED EUROPEAN LAUNCH DETAILS…

MARIO KART DS

This just looks better the more we see it. There's not much in the way of new info out, unfortunately, but we have got hold of a bunch of new screens that look very exciting indeed. Rumour has it that the game will release at launch in Japan on the 2nd of December. Rumblings are that the US will follow suit in January. If this is true, then you could be enjoying eight-player racing on your DS just weeks after you read this.

TOUCH! KIRBY'S MAGIC PAINT BRUSH

It's not often you'll hear us say we're looking forward to a new Kirby game – but we have to admit this one looks rather intriguing. Rather than controlling Kirby directly, you have to draw sweeping arcs and loops under the pink puffball in order to guide him to the collectables and enemies that litter the area. The top screen houses a handy map that allows you to plot an accurate path to those areas you've not yet visited, with the more difficult areas requiring deft use of the stylus in order to give Kirby enough momentum to reach them. It certainly shows a lot of promise, and, maybe it's just us, but in the parts where Kirby spent his time airborne, the game felt strangely reminiscent of Sega's *NiGHTS*. Which we know will certainly arouse the interest of some **NGC** readers…

SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

It's been a long time coming (*'Long'? Try 'twenty years'!* – Ed.) but it's finally happened. The Princess of Pastry, the Queen of Cake, has finally got her own adventure. An adventure that looks a lot like a 2D platformer. Hmmm. Anyway, we're sure it'll be 'good' and all that. You'll love the way she leaps, her skirt a' billowing. And the way she swings her disturbingly anthropomorphic umbrella in the air like she just doesn't care. Apparently – and this is the original bit – Peach is on a quest to find Mario, who, would you believe it, has himself been kidnapped. For all intents and purposes, this looks like a side-scrolling platformer complete with level selecting overworld, in the same vein as *Super Mario World*. How the dual or touchscreen features work we don't know – but we'd imagine the expression you get on Peach's huge face on the top screen has something to do with it. We think we'll hold fire before we start getting too excited about this one…

ANIMAL CROSSING

How can you make one of Gamecube's best games even better? By adding a four-player, wireless multiplayer to the mix, that's how. In a stroke of genius, *Animal Crossing* now lets you and up to three other players wander around the same town *at the same time*, letting you trade and chat away to your hearts' content. Visually the game will be quite different too, with more of a 'proper' 3D view. Rather than a birds-eye view, the game world scrolls as you move, with buildings and so on disappearing over the game's horizon as you move further away. A small thing, perhaps, but it gives you more of a feeling of 'being there' rather than just casually observing the town from above. This one's shaping up to be a real beauty.

HARVEST MOON DS

This looks suspiciously like the GBA game *Friends of Mineral Town* with the added 'bonus' of being able to interfere with the animals in your shed without having to wash your hands afterwards. So far we know you can soap up the horses and give them a good brushing and tweak the udders of cows. Presumably to get Milk. Not from the horse, of course – that'd be a bit wrong.

ADS MAGIC

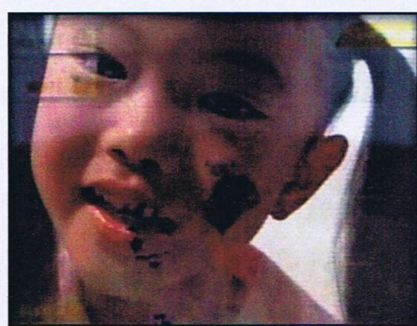
PROMOTING DS IN THE US AND JAPAN

Listen up Europe – Nintendo's marketeers in Japan and the US show that they're a dab hand at this advertising lark, with a wide range of stylish (and not so stylish) ads and websites to help build up awareness of the DS. Have a gander at some of these.



The ad above is the first that was aired in Japan. It shows popular popster Hikari Utada discovering the joys of DS. 'Can I touch it?' she asks. 'Of course you can, my love. That's the freakin' point!' – no-one actually says…





The next ones aren't really want you want to see first thing in the morning when you're tucking into your breakfast, granted, but these ads demonstrate the touch-screen interface admirably. The advert is viewed from behind the screen, showing people frantically waving their stylus at ghostly game images.

IN OTHER NEWS…

GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS

IT'S A HAT-TRICK FOR NINTENDO





△ Marcus' fears of a Paltrow-style outpouring were unfounded. Dawn's fears of his taste in shirts were entirely justified.



△ Marjorie startles Future Publishing's MD – *but how*?



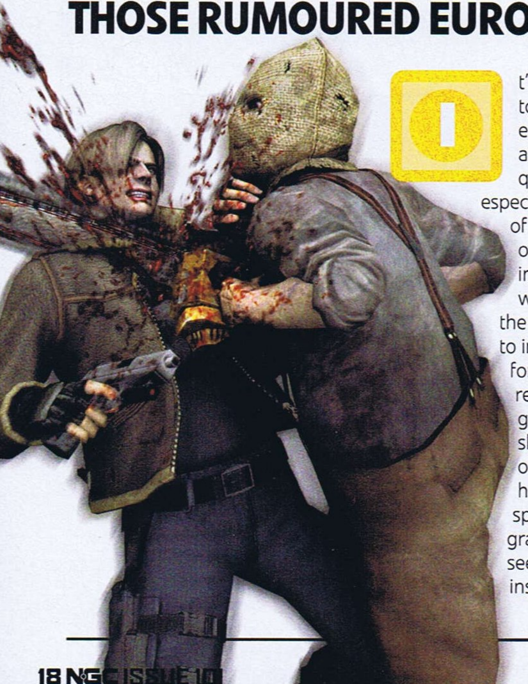
Nintendo did remarkably well at this year's prestigious awards, winning *three* Golden Joysticks – more than any other software publisher. Hosted by Little Britain's Marjorie Dawes and packed to the rafters with the industry's biggest movers and shakers, Nintendo claimed Hardware of the Year for the Classic NES GBA SP, and Gamecube Game of the Year was their reward for *Mario Kart: Double Dash*. Brilliantly, *The Legend of Zelda* picked up the 'Most Wanted Game For 2005'. And quite right too. *Resident Evil 4* came a close second. Well done Gamecube…

Marcus was on hand to dish out an award to Nintendo's scary Head of Marketing, Dawn Payne, before getting so inebriated at the after show party, he missed his stop in Bath on the way home and ended up in Exeter. Still, at least he managed not to 'lose' his trousers this time. Which is something.

On a slightly darker note, Geraint was dumbfounded to discover that *Sonic 3* had won Handheld Game of the Year! You know Geraint and Sonic. Just imagine his horror when the thorny blue one made a special guest appearance…

RESI 4 MIGRATES

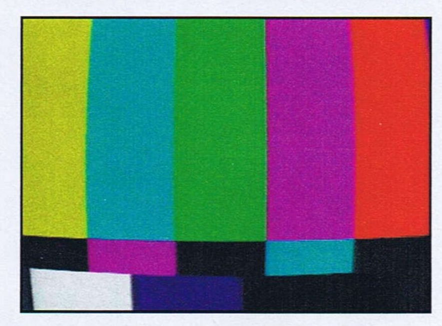
THOSE RUMOURED EUROPEAN LAUNCH DETAILS…



It's making it's way to PS2 towards the end of next year, and it's caused quite a stir – especially among some of the rabid obsessives on the internet forums who genuinely feel the world was about to implode. Baying for Capcom's blood, refusing to buy the game entirely and showing off some of the most horrendous spelling and grammar we've ever seen, they, in one instance, suggested they should '£%XxoR Capcom's mom'. Which seems a bit harsh. Yeah, we suppose complete exclusivity for Gamecube would have been nice, but the PS2 version won't see the light of day for another year yet, so count yourselves lucky you don't have that long to wait.

Anyway, the main reason this is particularly interesting/amusing is because Shinji Mikami – *RE4's* producer – promised that he would 'cut off' his own head if the game ever made it to PS2. We're not quite sure how Capcom plan to arrange that particular spectacle. It could prove an interesting day out though – maybe they could stage it as the grand finale to next year's E3. With an all-you-can-eat buffet…

ADS MAGIC

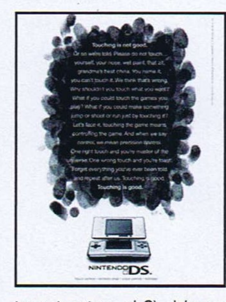


Easily our favourite, this series of three DS adverts from the US showed nothing but twin blue screens backed by some static noise. At which point an unseen woman whispers oh-so-quietly about DS's specific Touch Screen, Microphone and Wireless features. 'Touch the screen,' she says. 'Someone somewhere wants to play with you…'. Spooky.

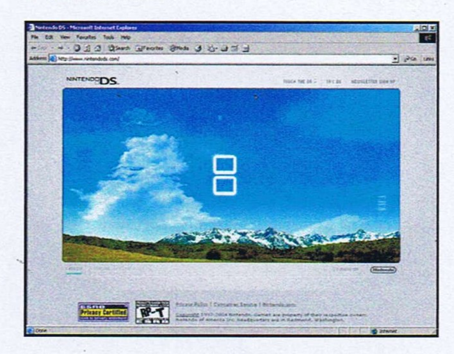




We've got mixed feelings about this one. Marcus likes it, Geraint hates it. It was aired on a slot on MTV in the US and featured the 'Wildboys' playing with DSs while riding elephants on safari. 'Hilariously' they get attacked by a pack of lions. But at least they still manage to keep playing *'Meat-roid'*.



This is,one of Nintendo's print ads. One of the tamer ones, as it happens. It seems Nintendo are aiming for a more mature audience by exploiting DS's touching element in a more adult way (we'll leave exactly what that involves to your imagination, eh?). It's a smart move, we suppose – just as long as they don't go down the lazy, tacky route…



Both the Japanese and the US websites for DS are brilliantly designed (head to www.nintendo.co.jp and www.nintendo.com respectively). If we've got to choose one, though, the stark white Japanese site wins out overall for us – if only for the unnecessarily cute *Puppy Times* video they've got on there.



GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS 2004™ WINNERS ANNOUNCED

PS2 Game of the Year
Burnout 3: Takedown
❑ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

GameCube Game of the Year
Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
❑ PUBLISHER: Nintendo

Handheld Game of the year
Sonic Advance 3
❑ PUBLISHER: THQ

Xbox Game of the Year
Fable
❑ PUBLISHER: Microsoft

PC Game of the Year
Doom 3
❑ PUBLISHER: Activision

Online Game of the Year
Battlefield Vietnam
❑ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

Publisher of the Year
Electronic Arts

Retailer of the year
Amazon.co.uk



Hardware of the Year
GBA SP NES Edition
❑ Nintendo

Unsung Hero Game of the year
The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay
❑ PUBLISHER: Vivendi

Editor's Award: Game of the Year
Pro Evolution Soccer 4
❑ PUBLISHER: Konami

Hall of Fame - Industry Personality of the Year
Warren Spector
❑ Ion Storm

Most Wanted Game for Xmas
GTA: San Andreas
❑ PUBLISHER: Rockstar Games

Most Wanted Game for 2005
The Legend of Zelda
❑ PUBLISHER: Nintendo

Ultimate Game of the Year
Doom 3
❑ PUBLISHER: Activision

Sun Award: Ultimate Gaming Hero
Sonic the Hedgehog
❑ DEVELOPER: SEGA





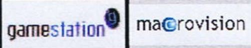
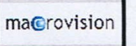
CHECK OUT THE WINNERS AT:
WWW.GOLDENJOYSTICK.CO.UK

In association with



Sponsored by







ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

NOVEMBER

26	Beyblade GRevolution (GBA)	Atari
26	Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision
26	Dead to Rights (GBA)	ZOO
26	Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue (GBA)	Nintendo
26	Lemony Snicket's A Series of...	Activision
26	Lemony Snicket's A Series of... (GBA)	Activision
26	Metroid Prime 2: Echoes	Nintendo
26	Pac-Man World (GBA)	ZOO
26	The Polar Express	THQ
26	The Polar Express (GBA)	THQ
26	Power Rangers: Dino Thunder (GBA)	THQ
26	Super Mario Ball (GBA)	Nintendo

DECEMBER

3	GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA
3	Monopoly (GBA)	ZOO
3	Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubi Soft
3	Racing Gears Advance (GBA)	ZOO
10	Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls (GBA)	Nintendo
22	NEW ISSUE OF NGC ON SALE TODAY!	

JANUARY 2005

6	King Arthur	Konami
7	The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Castlevania (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Dr Mario (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Metroid (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Zelda II The Adventure of Link (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	It's Mr Pants (GBA)	Rare/THQ
TBC	Shaman King: Master of Spirits (GBA)	Konami

FEBRUARY 2005

4	Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
25	Banjo-Kazooie Pilot (GBA)	Rare/THQ
25	Mario Power Tennis	Nintendo
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies (GBA)	THQ
TBC	SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ
TBC	SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie (GBA)	THQ

MARCH 2005

1	Smashing Drive (GBA)	ZOO
4	Ghost Recon 2	Ubi Soft
11	Robots	Vivendi
11	Robots (GBA)	Vivendi
11	TimeSplitters Future Perfect MOST WANTED	EA
18	Mario Party 6 MOST WANTED	Nintendo
TBC	Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown	THQ
TBC	Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Resident Evil 4 MOST WANTED	Capcom
TBC	Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ
TBC	Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: BattleNexus	Konami
TBC	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom

MAY 2005

TBC	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (DS)	Ubi Soft
TBC	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (GBA)	Ubi Soft

SPRING 2005

Advance Guardian Heroes (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django (GBA)	Konami
Killer 7	Capcom
Medal of Honor: Dogs of War	EA
Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt (DS)	Nintendo
NBA Street V3	EA
Nintendo DS (Hardware)	Nintendo
Super Mario 64 DS (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure	Ubi Soft
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure (GBA)	Ubi Soft

SUMMER 2005

Batman Begins	EA
Batman Begins (GBA)	EA

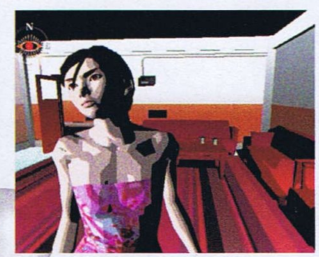
TBC 2005

Advance Wars DS (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo
Alien Hominid	O~3
Animal Crossing (DS)	Nintendo
Another (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Asphalt Urban GT (DS)	Ubi Soft
Atari Classics (DS)	Atari
Baten Kaitos	Namco
Bionicle 2 (GBA)	THQ
Boktai (working title) (DS)	Konami
Bomberman (DS)	Hudson
Castlevania (working title) (DS)	Konami
Codename: Kids Next Door (GBA)	Take 2
Custom Robo	Nintendo
DK: King of Swing (GBA)	Nintendo
Dora the Explorer: Super Star Adventures (GBA)	Take 2
Dragon Ball Z (DS)	Banpresto
Dragon Booster	Konami
Dragon Booster (DS)	Konami
Dragon Quest Monsters (working title) (DS)	Square Enix
Dynasty Warriors (DS)	Koei
Egg Monster Heroes (DS)	Square Enix
Fantastic Four	Activision
Feel the Magic: XY/XX (DS) MOST WANTED	Sega
FIFA STREET	EA
Final Fantasy III (DS)	Square Enix
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (working title) (DS)	Square Enix
Fire Emblem	Nintendo
Frogger 2005	Konami
Frogger 2005 (DS)	Konami
Funkydilla	Zoonami
Game Zero (working title)	Zoonami
Ganbare Goemon (DS)	Konami
Geist	Nintendo
The Godfather	EA
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (DS)	EA
Harvest Moon (DS)	Natsume
Jam with the Band (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Lamborghini FX	Avalon
The Legend of Zelda MOST WANTED	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda DS (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Madden NFL 2005 (DS)	EA
Mario Kart DS (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Mega Man Battle Network (DS)	Capcom
Meteos (DS)	Bandai
Mr Driller: Drill Spirits (DS)	Namco
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed (DS)	Bandai
Monster Rancher (DS)	Tecmo
Moonlight Fables (DS)	Majesco
The Movies	Activision
Nanostray (DS)	Majesco
Need for Speed Underground (DS)	EA
NEW Super Mario Bros (DS)	Nintendo
Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King (GBA)	Buena Vista
Nintendo Puzzle Collection	Nintendo
Odama	Nintendo
Oggy and the Cockroaches (GBA)	Telegames
One-Line Puzzle (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
One Piece (DS)	Bandai
Pac'n Roll (DS)	Namco
Pac-Pix (DS)	Namco
Ping Pals (DS)	THQ
Pokémon Dash (DS)	Nintendo
Pokémon Diamond (DS)	Nintendo
Pokémon Pearl (DS)	Nintendo
Puppy Times (working title) (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Puyo Pop Fever (DS)	Sega
Rave Master: Special Attack Force (GBA)	Konami
Rayman DS (DS)	Ubi Soft
Ridge Racer DS (DS)	Namco
Robots (DS)	Vivendi
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco
Scarface	Vivendi
Secret of Mana (DS)	Square Enix
Snowboard Kids DS (DS)	Atlus
Sonic DS (working title) (DS)	Sega
Space Raiders	Taito
Spider-Man 2 (DS)	Activision
SpongeBob SquarePants (DS)	THQ
Sprung (DS)	Ubi Soft
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox Assault MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Super Princess Peach (DS)	Nintendo
Survival Kids (DS)	Konami
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf 2005 (DS)	EA
Total Club Manager	EA
Touch! Kirby's Magic Paintbrush (DS)	Nintendo
Trainee Doctor Heaven (DS)	Spike
Ultimate Brain Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Pocket Games (DS)	Telegames
Unity	Lionhead
The Urbz: Sims in the City (DS)	EA
Vandal Hearts (working title) (DS)	Konami
Viewtiful Joe (DS)	Capcom
Virtua Quest	Sega
WarioWare Inc DS (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
WINX (working title) (DS)	Konami
World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco
World Soccer Winning Eleven Series (working title) (DS)	Konami
Yoshi's Universal Gravitation (GBA)	Nintendo
Yoshi's Touch and Go (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Yu-Gi-Oh! Destiny Board Traveller (GBA)	Konami
Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS)	Konami
Zoids (DS)	Tomy

US RELEASES

The most important US releases to import…





NOVEMBER

21	Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt (DS)	Nintendo
21	Nintendo DS (Hardware)	
21	Super Mario 64 DS (DS)	Nintendo
23	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom
29	Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls (GBA)	Nintendo

DECEMBER

6	Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
6	Mario Party 6	Nintendo

JANUARY 2005

4	Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town for Girls (GBA)	Natsume
7	NFL Street 2	EA
11	Resident Evil 4	Capcom
11	Virtua Quest	Sega
14	World Championship Poker	Crave

FEBRUARY 2005

15	Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway
28	Killer 7	Capcom

MARCH 2005

1	Geist	Nintendo

JUNE 2005

6	Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo
6	Fire Emblem	Nintendo

TBC 2005

DK: King of Swing (GBA)	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo
Odama	Nintendo
Star Fox Assault	Nintendo



JAP RELEASES

Big name Japanese future hits.





DECEMBER

2	Mr Driller Drill Spirits (DS)	Namco
2	Mr Incredible	D3
2	Nintendo DS (Hardware)	
2	Pokémon Dash (DS)	Nintendo
2	Sawaru Made in Wario (DS)	Nintendo
2	Super Mario 64 DS (DS)	Nintendo
2	Zoo Keeper (DS)	Success
9	Get Ride! AMDrive Shutsugeki! Battle Party (GBA)	Konami
9	Yoshi no Banyuuin Ryoko (GBA)	Nintendo
16	Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
16	Super Robot Taisen GC	Banpresto
16	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom
16	Wagamama * Fairy Milmo de Pon! (GBA)	Konami
24	Puyo Pop Fever (DS)	Nintendo
30	Tennis no Ouji-Sama 2005 Crystal Drive (DS)	Konami

JANUARY 2005

27	BioHazard 4	Capcom

TBC 2004

Bura Bura Donkey (GBA)	Nintendo
Yoot Saito's Odama	Nintendo

TBC 2005

Doubutsu no Mori DS (Animal Crossing) (DS)	Nintendo
Chaos Field	Sega
Killer 7	Capcom
The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Meteos (DS)	Bandai
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes	Nintendo
Star Fox	Nintendo
Touch! Kirby Mahou no Efude (Touch! Kirby Magic Paintbrush) (DS)	Nintendo

NGC MOST WANTED

The top ten games we're dreaming about right now (and in some cases, playing)…



1 ▲ THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO

Da dah, da da-da-da-da-daaah, da-da-da da-dah, da da da da da-da-dah! What better way to herald the rise of *Zelda* to the number one position this month than with the *Legend of Zelda* theme (that was what you were listening to if you hadn't guessed). According to Paul, this if going to rock 'bells'. We wish we were as cool as him.

IN A NUTSHELL: The UK's most wanted game. And that's official.



2 ▼ RESIDENT EVIL 4 CAPCOM

Yes, yes – down to the second spot again thanks to a resurgence in anticipation for *Zelda* caused by the Golden Joystick Awards (and temporary irritation caused by Capcom's decision to release *Resi 4* on PS2 as well – but hey, at least Nintendo gamers get it exclusively for a few months…) Our main interest now is in how many hours of gameplay it promises.

IN A NUTSHELL: One of the most stressful games we've played in recent months.



3 (NEW ENTRY!) SUPER MARIO 64 DS NINTENDO

There will certainly be people who'll come to the DS version of *Super Mario 64* without having played the original – and we're kind of jealous. Yes, the fact that there are four playable characters might spoil its purity, but at the same time it gives us old hands something new to get to grips with. Should be outstanding… if… if…

IN A NUTSHELL: … if they get the analogue control working properly.



4 ▲ MARIO KART DS NINTENDO

While we've yet to see any innovative use of the dual screen features with *Mario Kart DS* (although, you never know, they might shoe-horn in some minigames…), we still can't help but want it a little bit more every time we see it. Bets are already being exchanged in the office on whether this'll be the definitive Mario Kart.

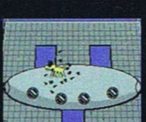
IN A NUTSHELL: Proof that DS can indeed do 3D better than some imagined…



5 (NEW ENTRY!) TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT EA

As you read this, one of our hard-working correspondents is at developers Free Radical playing the next instalment in the Splitters series. Early word is that it doesn't disappoint (and that's putting it mildly). Don't miss next issue, where we'll be delivering our early verdict on what could be Gamecube's greatest FPS to date…

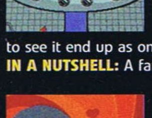
IN A NUTSHELL: One of the most anticipated games of 2005.



6 (NEW ENTRY!) WARIOWARE INC DS NINTENDO

Getting our hungry hands on the new GBA game and its twisty-turny thrills has whetted out appetite for the full scratchy-rub brilliance of DS Wario Ware. Another title – like *Feel the Magic: XY/XX* – which makes cracking use of the touch screen feature, it's no great surprise to see it end up as one of the Japanese launch titles.

IN A NUTSHELL: A familiar game given an injection of freshness.



7 ▼ FEEL THE MAGIC: XY/XX (DS) SEGA

Name another game where a guy in bunny ears tries to please one of them there *ladies* by making someone sick up fish. Or by brushing dirt off her. Or by poking a few bulls. BULLS! Go on. Just *one*. This is the sort of thing you just won't see on any other system – it's so tied in with the unique mix of features on DS. We salute the imagination of Sega's Yuji Naka…

IN A NUTSHELL: A blend of stylish, stupidly addictive minigames.



8 ▼ STAR FOX ASSAULT NINTENDO

The name's changed, but the release date remains the same: sometime next year. We'd hazard a guess at, ooh, 'Q3' (suit-speak for Autumn) for the UK? The game's 80% complete now and features a brand new control system that's less FPS, more action-adventure style.

IN A NUTSHELL: Action-packed shooter with some dazzling graphics.



9 ▼ MARIO PARTY 6 NINTENDO

Just out in Japan, we'll be reviewing Hudsonsoft's microphone-powered party game next issue. Just in time for Christmas. Yes, come the morning of 25th December, we'll be in our slippers, dressing gowns and cracker crowns, huddled around a hot TV and ridiculing Geraint's attempts to make Wario jump using his filthy Welsh mouth alone.

IN A NUTSHELL: The sixth Mario Party.



10 (NEW ENTRY!) PUPPY TIMES (DS) NINTENDO

There are just a few games that can draw together the chalk and cheese software tastes of the **NGC** team. *Puppy Times* is a prime example of one that has The Power (despite Kittsy's mention of 'sack' and 'couple of bricks'). Real dogs? Robot dogs? Rubbish, mate…

IN A NUTSHELL: Mutts that won't stink the place up. Excrement!

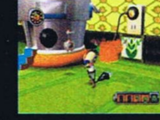


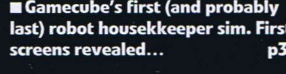
△ Shooting around a corner. You can lean left and right to make it a bit easier, although it doesn't help you tell which troops are on your side.

△ Looking directly down the barrel of a gun is another one of those *Medal of Honor* things. Actually, it always used to be like this in *Doom* as well.



TIMESPLIITERS FUTURE PERFECT
■ Return of the King. All-new shots of the anticipated sequel. p26





CHIBI ROBO
■ Gamecube's first (and probably last) robot housekeeper sim. First screens revealed… p30



STAR FOX ASSAULT
■ New name and features. p30



FIFA STREET
■ Following in the footsteps (trainer treads?) of *NFL/NBA*… p32

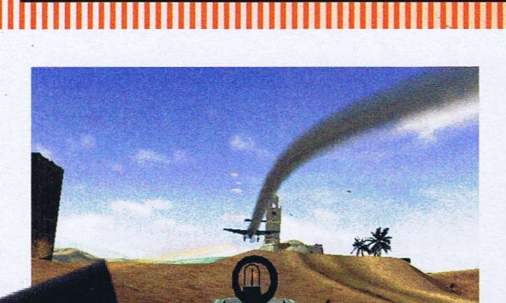


BATMAN BEGINS
■ First image from EA's film tie-in. Better than Catwoman? p32





FIRE EMBLEM
■ The Gamecube version's shaping up nicely… p33



△ Crash! Crash! Or is he supposed to be on our side?



△ Get your mates to open the doors for you. Safer.



△ Authentic weapons are part of the game's appeal.

CALL OF DUTY FINEST HOUR

We shall fight them on the Gamecube. Activision take on EA in a bloody battle for supremacy…



△ It's gone all red because someone just shot our soldier in the back of the head.



△ Watch out for snipers – they're hanging out in the strangest places.



△ We set that tank on fire. Now there are blokes cooking inside it. Result.

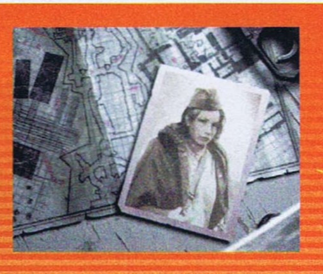
How about this for a nightmare scenario: you're an untrained, malnourished conscript about to enter the bloodiest battle of World War Two, where your life expectancy will be measured in minutes. You arrive not by aircraft or armoured vehicle, but on a rowing boat stuffed with soldiers, commanded by an officer who'll happily shoot anyone who falls overboard.

And, best of all, you have a few rounds of ammunition but no gun. The bloke in front of you got the rifle, and you're expected to prise it out of his dead hands when he cops it. Which will be pretty soon now, since the area you're running flat out towards is affectionately known as the Meat Grinder. Well, maybe getting ground up isn't the worst way to go.

So begins *Call Of Duty*, the most scarily authentic war game we've played. From what we've seen so far, it's a lot more appealing than the *Medal Of Honor* series, and not simply because it knows how to spell its own name. *Call Of Duty* emphasises the scale of a battle by throwing incredible numbers of soldiers around the warzone.

When the action really hots up, it seems like there must be hundreds of people out there, gathering in squads, streaming through the streets, or carrying huge flags that might as well have 'shoot me' written on them. The game's animation system means large numbers of characters can be displayed using the same models and animation, but by changing the synchronisation of their movements it gives the impression of multiple different individuals. It's reasonably convincing, and most characters get killed quickly anyway.

You aren't left vulnerable all the time though. For a large part of the game you'll be safely imprisoned within the steel confines of a tank, which you can drive using a claustrophobic first-person view for complete authenticity. It's brilliantly done, and almost feels like a completely different game. Other scenes see you manning a machine gun as your computer buddies drive a speeding jeep through hostile territory. Like the rest of the game, you've seen it somewhere before, but probably not as slickly implemented as this.



THE KNOWLEDGE

■ The most realistic World War Two game on consoles.
■ Play as Russian, British and American soldiers, fighting on the Eastern, Western and North African Fronts.
■ More on-screen characters than any other first-person game. It's the Pikmin of mass murder.

FACTFILE

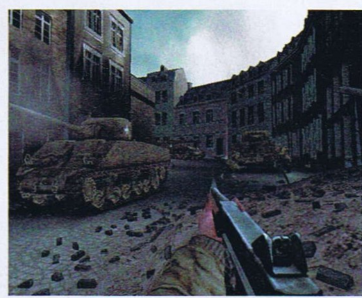
■ **Who's making it?**
Spark Unlimited

■ **What have they done before?**
Medal of Honor: Frontline (NGC/75 74%)
CoD is Spark's first game, but some members of the team worked on the *MoH* series.

"Sand, landmines, Germans and sand"



△ A nice alternative to muddy brown – grim grey. Was it always raining back then?



△ *'Splitters* will still rule the FPS kingdom we reckon, but this doesn't look too bad.

BLOWN AWAY

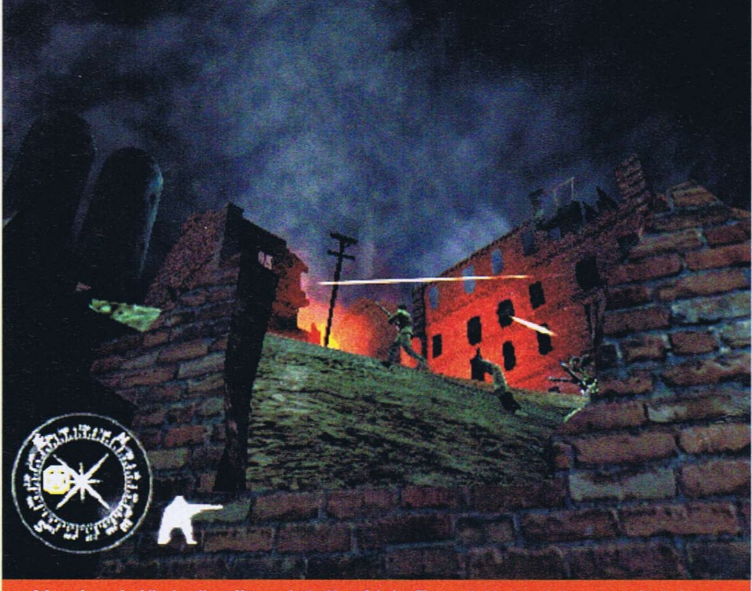
Grab a gun off a dead body, grab some ammo off another dead body, and you're well on the way to making some dead bodies of your own.



■ Shortly after you step off the rowing boat in the opening scene, you walk through the field hospital where unfortunate soldiers put their feet up.



■ This guy gives you some ammo. Your mate, who you met just a few minutes ago, gets the gun. It's perhaps unsurprising that this arrangement doesn't last.



■ A few of your buddies heading off towards the Meat Grinder. They probably thought it was some kind of trendy club. You've got the right idea, crouching behind this bit of ruined wall while you fill your pants with brown fear.



■ Steven Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan has a lot to answer for – namely an entire army of games that rip off the film's shakycam style and grainy visuals.



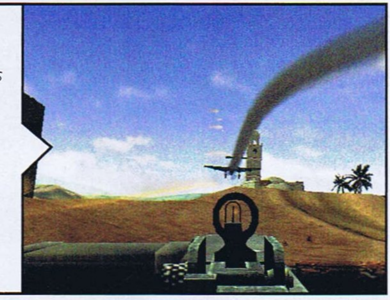
■ Perhaps one day somebody will do a war game that isn't all gloomily realistic and miserable. It could star Waluigi, and would be called Super Waluigi's WWII.

IT'S IN THE GAME

Dare you challenge everything?

AFRICA

A stinking great desert filled with sand, landmines, Germans and sand. This is where all the best vintage war movies were set, so you'll have a chance to relive some of your favourite Desert Rats moments as you trudge through the heat haze and shoot at mirages. Luckily you don't die from dehydration if you get lost.





FRANCE

Fighting through the garlicky streets of occupied France, where every church tower may conceal a German sniper, and there are platoons of elite soldiers waiting around every corner. This is all incredibly familiar from the Medal of Honor series, so you could be forgiven for thinking you'd been here many times before.

RUSSIA

The opening level is the most oppressive of the lot, filled with burning ruins and soon-to-be-dead soldiers. You could spend ages watching them pour through gaps in the rubble and get mowed down by machine gun nests. Except if you wait around, you'll probably be executed for cowardice, like your mate at the start.







ROOM SERVICE

Look, they've come to bring you breakfast and newspapers. Right now they're standing in the doorway, hoping for a tip so their kids can eat something other than dirt tonight. Alternatively, it's a crack military squad, clearing a building, room by room, killing anything that moves. That's more like it.





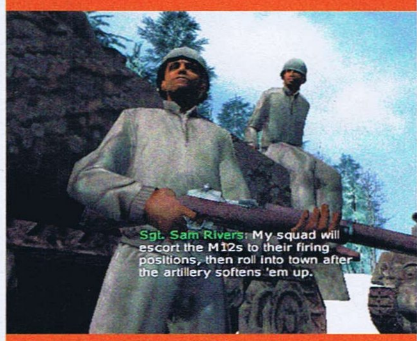









DRIVING LICENCE



■ Tanks rule. Nobody argues with you when you're tucked up nice and cosy inside a gigantic gun on wheels, which comes as a very pleasant change from the rest of the campaign. At a certain point in the game your tank will break down, forcing you back out onto the streets where all those nasty men are firing bullets at you.



■ Pretty scary, these German forces. Most sensible people would give up and welcome their new Teutonic masters – at least the trains would run on time, and everyone would have terrific sausage for breakfast. Hopping in a tank and trundling around the countryside, getting shot at, is your only real option here.

NGC VERDICT

UK 26 NOV | US OUT NOW | JAPAN TBC



It isn't the world's greatest FPS, but it makes the *MoH* games look dated. This is a leap forward in technology, as far as wholesale slaughter goes, and it does a top job of showing what it's like to be a cog in the war machine. But why wasn't it made available in time for a review? Is something wrong with the GC version? Find out in **NGC** next month.

ANTICIPATION RATING










THE KNOWLEDGE

- The long-awaited follow-up to 2002's 92%-rated *TimeSplitters 2*.
- Enhanced graphics running at a silky 60 frames per second.
- Commandeer vehicles while your partner takes care of the shooting.
- Encounter multiple versions of yourself from different points in time.
- Improved Story mode.
- Huge multiplayer mode.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Free Radical

What have they done before?
Second Sight (NGC/97 90%)
Outstanding psychic stealth game with elements of *Metal Gear Solid* and, erm, Carrie.





Hoo-hah! It's worth getting a solid body shot for this upskirt angle.



Don't worry, you don't lose any points for killing them in the back.

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

Taking a drive with what's likely to be the best first-person shooter on Gamecube.



GoldenEye didn't turn out quite as well as we had hoped (see page 36). Oh well. But here's the perfect tonic to cure those first-person blues, and it's from some of the main talent behind the real *GoldenEye* on the N64. We promise you, there's absolutely no danger of this one turning out to be a post-Christmas turkey.

If you've been reading **NGC** for the last year or so, you should be pretty familiar with *TimeSplitters Future Perfect*. Judging by the letters and emails we receive, it's one of the most anticipated titles on Gamecube, and if what we've seen of the game so far is anything to go by, it's going to be a worthy successor to the outstanding and long-lived *TimeSplitters 2*.

In preparation for next month's exclusive *TimeSplitters* blowout (we'll show you everything on 22nd December), here's a quick recap of what we know so far. And a damn fine excuse to print the latest set of screens to leak out of developer Free Radical's Nottingham studio.

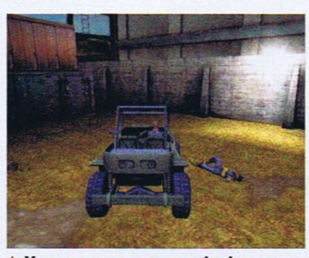
The big new feature demonstrated in the shots over these three pages is the ability to drive vehicles. You can hop into a car, truck or buggy, and zoom around the level with a computer buddy blasting bad guys from the passenger seat. Or a human buddy, if you play co-op.

> **"HOP INTO A TRUCK AND ZOOM AROUND BLASTING BAD GUYS FROM THE PASSENGER SEAT"**

The game's time-travelling storyline sees you zipping between locations and time zones where you'll occasionally meet a past or future version of yourself. You'll then have to protect yourself while yourself helps you accomplish some crucial task in your mission. It's a temporal paradox. Or maybe just a videogame plot.

The existence of any sort of plot at all is Free Radical's response to criticism of the previous game's lightweight solo adventure.

Most of the levels in *TimeSplitters 2* were effectively extended rounds of 'capture the bag' – fun, but a little basic compared to the many contemporary first-



Yep, you can run people down.



CHARACTER

The art style is so distinctive, there's no way you could ever mistake TimeSplitters for anything else. That's the way we like it.



DETAILED

Doesn't this look great? Electronic Arts should get Free Radical working on the next Bond game. Please?



GUNS, GUNS, GUNS

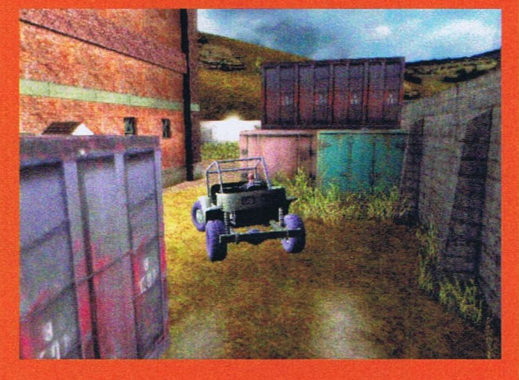
This game is all about shooting, so it's only right that it should have a huge array of weapons. They change depending on your time zone.



GADGETS TOO

Our favourite non-lethal gizmo is the gravity gadget which can be used to lift items and characters. Time to stack some crates! If you use it right, it can be lethal too.

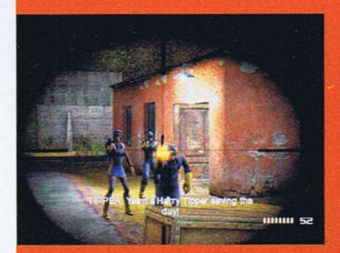
PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES



If there are two essential ingredients for the fashionable first-person shooter about town these days, they are some kind of telekinetic power and a bunch of vehicles to drive. *TimeSplitters Future Perfect* scores a hit on both counts, thanks to its lovely new gravity weapon and the levels where you take charge of a variety of cars. Sweet.



PROTECT AND SURVIVE



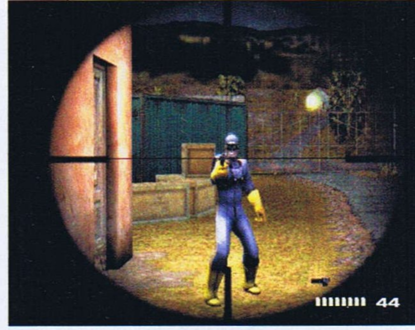


■ In this level you have to rely on a spot of assistance from your friends. Let's hope they don't get stuck on pointy bit of wall.

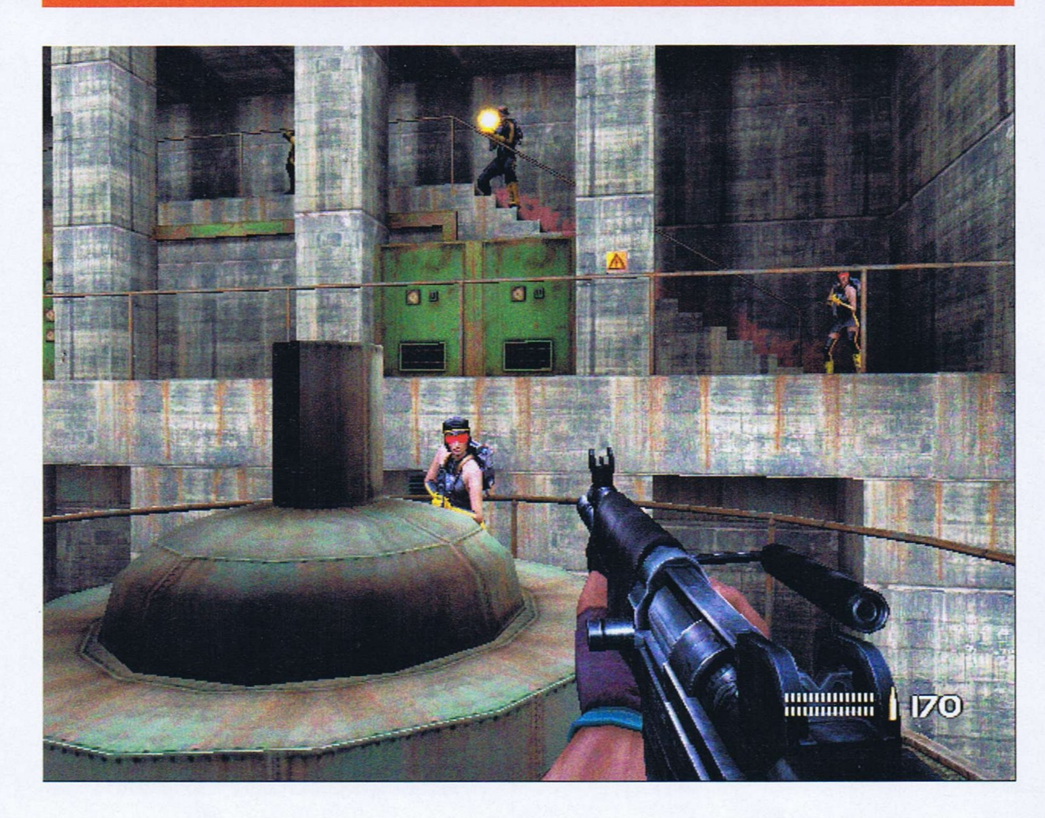
■ Clear the way so Harry Tipper can get to the manhole over there. See how the sniper target isn't in the centre of the screen? Precision!

■ Harry makes it to the ladder, climbs down, and that's your lot for this particular section. You'll meet up with him again in the future.


△ Time to test this nice new gun on a lovely lady.


△ Certainly, sir – one head shot, coming right up.


△ Not all characters need to be shot on sight.



person games attempting to push the envelope as far as the single-player experience goes. This time there'll be much more variety, you can count on it.

Of course, the main focus of *TimeSplitters* has always been

"A PRECISION AIMING SYSTEM ALLOWS YOU TO RETAIN YOUR VIEW OF THE WIDER AREA"

the incredible multiplayer modes, and this is an area that certainly won't be neglected in this third instalment. Until we find out more next month, all Free Radical have shown us is a lone multiplayer level that could easily have come out of either of the two previous games.

The new stuff will feature the aforementioned vehicles as well as reworked versions of old favourites. The map maker will be improved too, and while it won't allow you to design anything as elaborate as the built-in levels (as you'd expect), you'll be able to design more intricate and interesting arenas than before.

Thankfully, the brilliant control system remains largely unchanged from before, which is great news for old *GoldenEye* fans. In case you've never experienced it, the controls differ from most other first-person games in so far as you have to hold down one of the shoulder triggers to bring up the aiming target.

With the trigger pressed, you can move the target around the screen to pick off individual enemies, rather than shifting the entire screen while keeping the target centred.

The result is a precision aiming system that allows you to hit very small things and still retain a good view of the wider area, a bit like in a shooting gallery. Like the controls in *Metroid Prime*, it takes a little re-adjustment if you're used to playing ordinary first-person games but it's worth the effort.

We'll let you know if the final game will include any options to make *TimeSplitters Future Perfect* play more like *Quake*, which seems to be a common enough request on internet fan sites.

Check out next month's issue for loads more, when we'll have a chance to play a near-final version. 2005 looks to be a year of high quality GC releases…

NGC VERDICT

UK 11 MAR | US Q1 2005 | JAPAN TBA



It's slickly programmed, expertly designed, and loads of fun to play. Here's Gamecube's state-of-the-art first-person shooter, and another huge multiplayer diversion. If we had to pick out any concerns, the only big things we can think of are how well the vehicles will work and whether your computer buddy characters will be smart enough.

ANTICIPATION RATING






SFX

BUY THIS OR YOU'LL SPEND 2005 REGRETTING IT!



INSIDE!

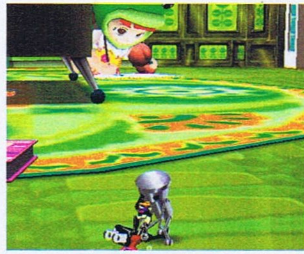
- Top 10 Movies, Books, Comics, DVDs & TV Hits!
- All-new, exclusive Simon Pegg interview
- Exclusive behind-the-scenes pictures of Smallville
- Complete 110-episode, five-season guide to Angel
- A month-by-month look back at 2004's greatest SF moments
- Exclusive I, Robot designs
- Quotations of the year
- And loads, loads more!



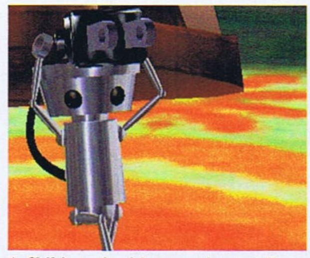
HOT NEW GAMES

Updating you on the games of the future.

△ Looks like Chibi's dad has been hitting the Castrol again. Just clean around him, and hope he doesn't spill any more brake fluid all over the floor. The stain never comes out.



△ The little girl isn't too keen on Chibi's basic shiny appearance.



△ Chibi carries his own plug at all times, but isn't earthed. Bzzzzt!

CHIBI ROBO

Cleaning up with the world's smallest robo-vac, from the people who brought us Giftpia.



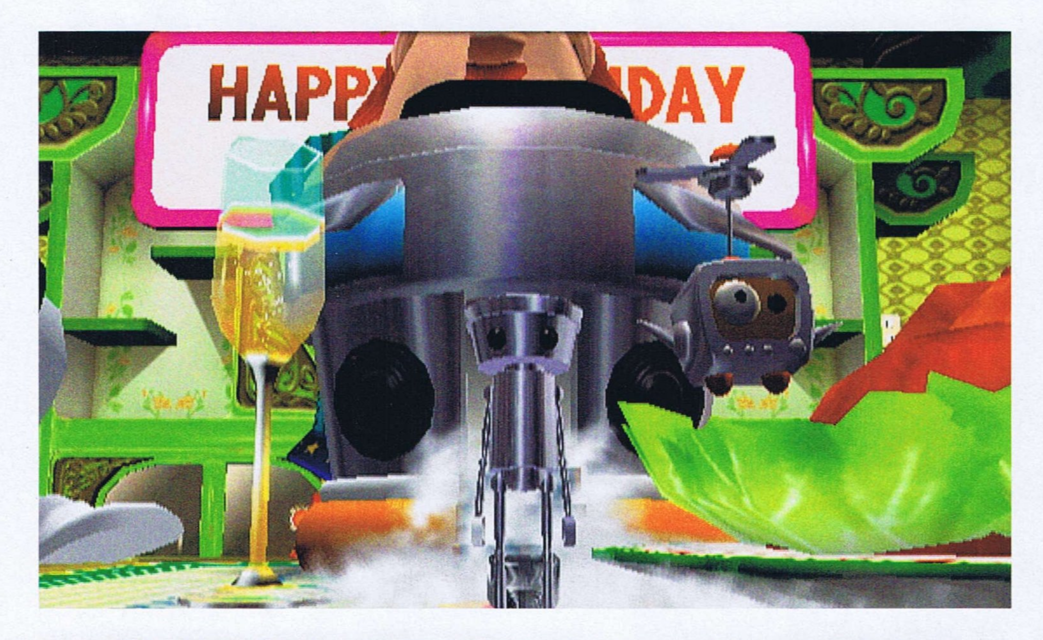
Owning a robot housekeeper would be brilliant – no more stepping in half-empty pizza boxes first thing in the morning, or finding vintage pants stuffed in dark corners of the bedroom, complete with their own ecosystems. Being a robot housekeeper sounds too much like hard work.

But that's what this new effort from the masters of weirdness at Skip Tokyo is all about. You play Chibi, a tiny silver robot who cleans, entertains and generally helps bring smiles to the faces of his giant human masters.

Although there are puzzle elements and RPG bits in here, it's hard to pigeonhole *Chibi Robo*. Daily tasks such as feeding goldfish, locating lost items or dusting high shelves require different skills or costumes for Chibi, and sometimes unlock collectible minigames. Chibi also has to wear the appropriate outfit when talking to different members of the family, in order to earn their friendship. Being very small, Chibi only has a tiny battery which will run flat if he goes too long without topping up at a mains socket. When fully charged, Chibi's built-in plug can be used to give an electrical kiss of life to various household appliances, opening new routes through the parts of the building. The brain-teasers mainly involve managing Chibi's energy reserves so he has enough to activate a new bridge or platform and make it to the wall socket on the other side without collapsing.

Events in the house change depending on the time of day, as do its occupants. Chibi can explore at night when everyone is asleep, and prepare the place for each family member before they wake in the morning.

Skip's previous effort, the lovely *Giftpia*, never made it out of Japan, and there's no confirmation of an English translation. It's nowhere near as text-heavy as *Giftpia* though.

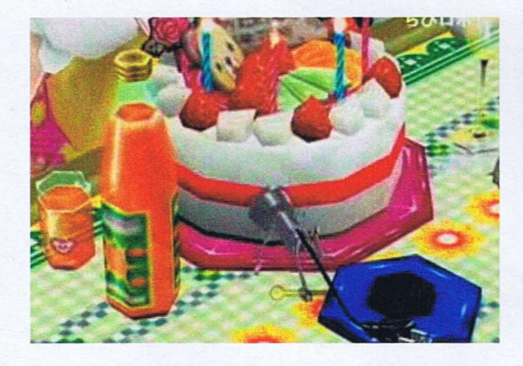








△ Here's a costume that looks a bit like a Power Ranger. The hulking great power lead trailing behind Chibi spoils the look somewhat.







△ Chibi can dress up in cute outfits to please different members of the family. In this pic, he's totally naked.



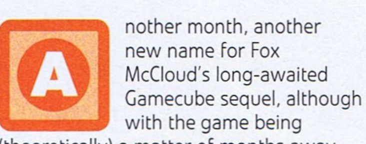
△ Looking at Chibi, it's easy to imagine David Gosen as a young botling. They should do an Adult Gosen mode too.



△ This giant butterfly thing unfolds its wings to launch deadly purple rings at Foxy.

STAR FOX ASSAULT

New name, new levels revealed.



Another month, another new name for Fox McCloud's long-awaited Gamecube sequel, although with the game being (theoretically) a matter of months away, this one is likely to stick. The latest version shown off by Nintendo features intense space battles and a level set at low altitude over the surface of a misty forest planet. It's exactly like the N64 version, except with some rather nice on-foot sections and a lot more 360° free-roaming levels. There's a completely different control method for the ground-based bits. It's like two games for the price of one.



△ Four players fight it out in the city landscape of Corneria. Hectic stuff.



△ When on foot or in a tank, the game controls a bit like a first-person shooter.

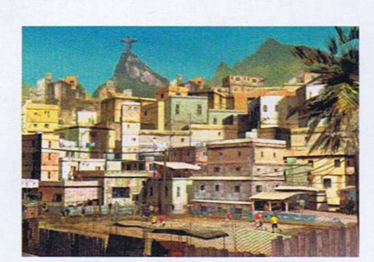
FIFA STREET

Just don't mention the words 'urban' or 'freestyle'.



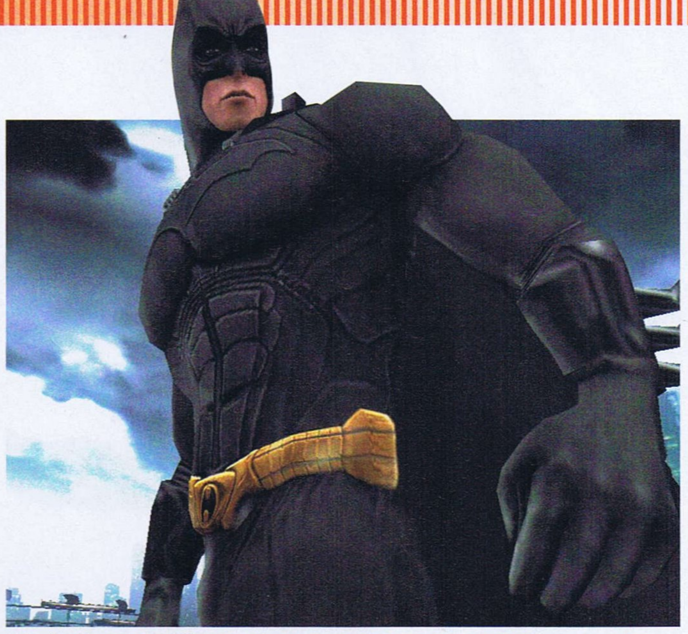
Coming next year from EA Sports Big, this is the logical extension of the rough-and-ready arcade-style series that proved such a success with *NBA* and *NFL Street*. It's a four-on-four version of football, with pared-down rules and a lot more tricks than its ubiquitous, perennial big brother. Real players will feature alongside a selection of fantasy and user-created ones, and we're promised a control system that offers a unique one-on-one method of beating a defender or tackling a forward. Interesting. We'll be pretty chuffed if it matches the quality of the other titles in the Street series. Check out these urban scenes. Oops!







△ Who wants to pretend to be David Beckham playing at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu when you can be Wayne Herbert playing in front of a council estate?



△ Lucky Batman has his own private gym in his fat palatial mansion, otherwise he'd never fit into his rubber fetish gear after another hard day of TV and nachos.

BATMAN BEGINS

To smell? To cry? A course of powerful antibiotics?



Did you know they were making a movie about Batman's origins, revealing the reason he likes to dress up in rubber and beat people up at midnight? Surely Tim Burton's first effort covered all that in as much detail as an audience will ever need, but such trifling matters have never concerned Hollywood.

And it doesn't seem to concern Electronic Arts that Batman has the unenviable record of being the worst videogame character of the last seven years, or at least starring in the most consistently low-rated titles. Plus they recently squeezed out a bit of a Batman-related stinker with the risible *Catwoman*. This one won't even have a digital Halle Berry to look at, since Bats is played by Christian Bale. As long as it isn't a generic platformer or a 3D beat-'em-up, it has a chance. Maybe Batman will turn out to be the next Lara Croft. Yes.

PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN

We sought him here, we sought him there. Maybe next time…



We were planning to bring you a review this month, since this should be in the shops in a matter of days, but last minute hitches meant a finished Gamecube version wouldn't arrive until after our deadline. So if you do see a sneaky review anywhere, bear in mind it's based on an unfinished, buggy preview version. Anyway, we're mentioning the game here because we do like it a lot, and we wanted to let you know that, further delays permitting, we'll give it the proper treatment next month. There's nothing like a spot of cliff-hanging, sword-fighting movie matinee action, and the last *Prince of Persia* game was genuinely excellent. Until you read our review, try before you buy…



△ Double swords for double the decapitation.



△ You have to sit on this beast's back to kill it.



Δ *Odama* was wheeled out in video form for the Nintendo World event, which should be on its last few dates by the time you read this. Get on over to Japan...

ODAMA

Samurai warriors and pinball wizards, together at last.



ou know a game is going to be little bit different when the company behind it once made a 'forbidden pet' sim about a fish with a man's face. A fish that you talked to via a microphone. And it talked back. In the voice of Leonard Nimoy.

Odama isn't quite as insane as Vivarium's only previous game, the legendary *Seaman*, but it's definitely something we've never seen before – pinball played over the top of a wargame with hundreds of little soldiers to command. The latest version was shown only on video at Nintendo's recent travelling event in Japan, so we still can't report on how well the two-player mode works.

The second player keeps the troops rallied by thumping out a rhythm on a set of bongos, while the first player takes care of issuing orders and controlling the flippers that propel the huge ball towards the enemy positions. We're itching to have a crack at that, especially since the solo mode proved to be one of our favourite diversions at E3. As for a release date, it's anybody's guess right now. *Seaman* took years...









Δ Just like the GBA game but with better graphics and new moves. Sorted.

FIRE EMBLEM SOSEN NO KISEKI

Think Advance Wars, but with swords and pitchforks...



n Game Boy it's like the fantasy version of *Advance Wars*, and is completely brilliant. In making the step up to Gamecube, thankfully it hasn't gone down the *Advance Wars Under Fire* route. It's essentially the same thing as the many handheld editions, with more options, some new tactics for strategic experts to think about, and excellent graphics. Exactly what fans of the series wanted.

If you've never played one of the simpler versions, think *Advance Wars* in feudal Japan. It's entirely turn-based – you move your troops, perform as many actions as you're allowed, then wait for your opponent to digest your choices and respond in kind. The main way it differs from *Advance Wars* is by having veteran units – warriors who survive from battle to battle, learning new abilities as they gain experience. In the Gamecube version, units can learn multiple skills, forgetting old ones if their tiny minds run out of space. A wide range of character classes and techniques should make this the definitive *Fire Emblem* title when it's released in Japan early next year.



Δ Is the humble 2D shoot-'em-up making a comeback? Whatever.

CHAOS FIELD

Ikaruga fans should have fun with this. Like Treasure's incredibly difficult sci-fi shooter, it's a conversion of an arcade and Dreamcast title, it involves flipping your ship between states to maximise your scoring, and it's murderously hard. While it doesn't have the same level of visual polish as *Ikaruga*, there's an awful lot happening on the screen. On Japanese import early next year.



Δ "Where are my pants? Big pants! Get off my pants!" You get the idea.

IT'S MR PANTS

Oh Rare, what happened? The latest title straight outta Twycross (via THQ) is a puzzler involving abstract shapes, which are nice, and one of the most improbable game characters since Loggo the toilet. It's a stick man with a big pair of Y-fronts, who shrieks 'comedy' phrases every time you touch the controls. It's like the very worst of Mr Bean multiplied by Ben bleedin' Elton. Make. It. Stop.



Δ Not sure why they've included Pocahontas as a character...

BANJO PILOT

Rare's other GBA title is the game formerly known as *Diddy Kong Pilot*. Taking inspiration from the flying bits in N64's *Diddy Kong Racing*, it's a *Mario Kart* affair with weapons, special items and speed-up boosters that float in the air – you can control the height of your plane, see. It would have been a lot nicer with the motion sensor it was originally going to have, but still works okay with a D-pad.



GAME BOY WARS 1 & 2

Otherwise known as *Advance Wars*, so this is something most of us finished ages ago. But spare a thought for our friends in Japan, who missed out on *Advance Wars* at the time. This strategy wargame remains the best thing on GBA, and now the original version plus the sequel are getting bundled together on one enhanced cart.

OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS









GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT

It's got a lot to live up to – is this 'Eye evilly good or just plain bad? P36

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



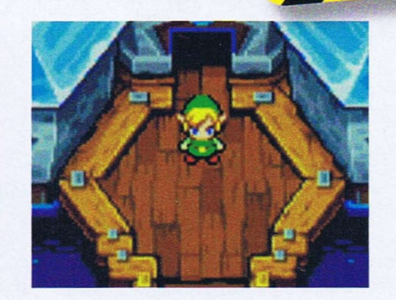
THE URBZ SIMS IN THE CITY

If this is to be believed, the way to be cool is to change your clothes and actions to fit in with other people. Rebel, we say! Refuse to wash! Rebel! P43



MAWARU MADE IN WARIO

Wario tops his previous manic minigames with a new set – all based around a motion-sensitive GBA cart. Woozy! P62



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE MINISH CAP

After last issue's abortive attempt at a review, we finally get our hands on the full version of Link's mini adventure. Hats off to the wee elf! P58

AND...

SPYRO A HERO'S TAIL P56
THE INCREDIBLES P57
GTA ADVANCE P59
FINAL FANTASY I & II DAWN OF SOULS (GBA) P60
GBA REVIEWS P60
KURURIN SQUASH P70
DONKEY KONGA 2 HIT SONG PARADE P72

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

Light heroine or dark evil chick? Whichever one you choose, it's all the Samus. P44



MARIO POWER TENNIS

It's tennis with extra oomph. And a fair helping of unsporting Specials. P64

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
■ Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this game is crud.

25-49
■ A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
■ Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.



THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some quick plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suitable suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Gamecube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? This is where you'll find out for sure...

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

+
- Tasty food.
- Not too expensive.
- Free prawn crackers thrown in.



- Gives you wind (gives Mim wind, at any rate...)
- Rowdy at 11:15pm.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Big Kahuna Burger
Yumsoft
NGC/33, 100% (fat)
Yes sir, that's a tasty burger. Now we'll blow your brains out. Cheers!



8 VISUALS
All those tasty morsels jumbled up together in a tray



1 SOUNDS
Makes no sound at all. Unless you shake your dinner.

9 MASTERY
A few simple ingredients, a little taste of MSG heaven.

1 LIFESPAN
If any lasts until the morning, Mim'll eat it for breakfast.

VERDICT
Golden Dragon is a massive success, and the whole team enjoy it. We'll buy every tasty dish in the series.

NGC 87

MEET THE NGC TEAM

What do the team want for Christmas? They won't get it...



MARCUS
Something to help him preserve wildlife. The team through of sponsoring an ape for him. Kittsy bought him a pickled chimp leg...



PAUL
Material goods don't appeal to Paul. He's more spiritual, dude. But a ticket to Bondi Beach or Hawaii would go down a treat.



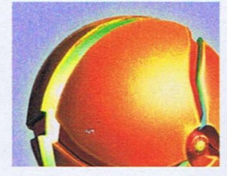
KITTSY
Shigeru Miyamoto, bound and gagged in the boot of his car. This is the only way he can be sure that Shigsy never strays...



GERAINT
An orange in the toe of his stocking, a spud gun and enough black coffee to keep him awake and playing PSO for a fortnight.



MIM
Her friends and relations to go away so she can enjoy Christmas in Animal Crossing, with the people she really loves.



JES
A fresh tin of baldy polish, a really LOUD megaphone, and to resume his captaincy on the Starship Enterprise. Ho ho ho...



△ Ah, the old human shield technique. You can even throw your captive back.



△ You'll grab this minigun off a miniboss-type character. It's slow to fire but kicks arse.

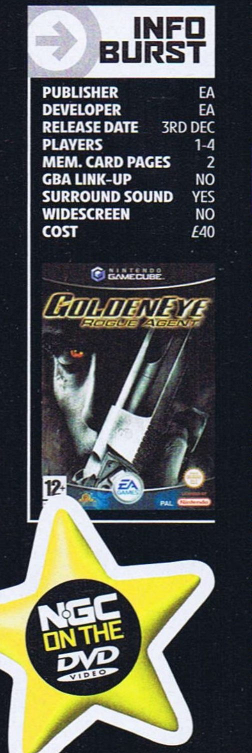


△ Enemy animation is admittedly entertaining and varied, and they always die in pleasing ways. Good boys.

GoldenEye Rogue Agent

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	3RD DEC
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



Be the bad guy! And invite comparisons with an *old* game.

It was a chilly autumn day in 1997 when our world changed forever. Rare's *GoldenEye* arrived in the N64 Magazine office and things would never be the same again. If truth be known, little was expected of the game, as without any hype of fanfare behind it looked like a competent film-licensed shooter. How wrong we were. The earth tilted off its axis that day and first-person shooters would never be the same again, with mission objectives, stealth and a toybox-like approach to tackling levels as you saw fit being incorporated into the games that followed in the wake of Bond's brilliance. *Ocarina of Time* was still over a year away and would shift the ground beneath our feet even further, but *GoldenEye* was a revelation – it even ousted *Mario Kart 64* as the lunchtime multiplayer game of choice, a thing unheard of. And, even now, we dust off the N64 and indulge in a little Licence To Kill on the Facility level every so often. *GoldenEye* rules. It always will, even if it looks primitive and blocky in the light of today's space-age graphics.

And it's back. Sort of. EA have created a new game set in the Bond universe, one that uses the same name as the best-selling game on the N64. But has the brilliance of the game's gameplay been resurrected along with the name? Can this new *GoldenEye* live up to its predecessor's proud legacy? Or is it simply a shameless name-dropping cash-in? Read on…

"HAS THE BRILLIANCE OF ITS GAMEPLAY BEEN RESURRECTED ALONG WITH THE NAME?"



△ Rubbish blue sparks denote a shot enemy. Where's the blood? Pfft.


GOLDENEYE
Seeing is believing

"A seemingly unending hail of bullets"



FIGHT FRIEND

As it's called 'GoldenEye', we had enormous hopes for Rogue Agent's *multiplayer game. And while it's good fun, smooth and full of options, it's not as brilliant as we'd hoped, and we've been having more fun with* Metroid Prime 2's *more limited but polished multiplayer modes. That said, there are tonnes of levels to unlock and the addition of level-specific deathtraps leads to much cackling and rubbing of hands. Fun, then.*



△ There are loads of opportunities for sniping at bad guys while whizzing down death slide-style ziplines. Neat.



△ *Rogue Agent* may be problematic, but it does encourage you to shoot cleverly at times, using cover and ducking out of the



△ The casino level is oddly free of bullet-ridden civilians. Never mind.



△ A shotgun blast to the face takes 'em down in one shot. Some things never change, eh?

AFTERS

GoldenEye *and* Perfect Dark *allowed for what Kittsy so endearingly termed 'afters'; the art of shooting someone in the head after they die, resulting in violent nodding and blood spillage.* Rogue Agent *is rather disappointing in this respect, offering only blue sparks when head-blasting. It's like shooting a robot. Pah.*

We know what you're thinking. It's the question we've been constantly asking ourselves ever since *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* was first announced. Namely, is this actually a sequel, in terms of gameplay, to what remains one of the best games ever made, a first-person shooter that bestrides today's offerings like a legendary colossus? Allow us to answer that right now.

Nope. Not in the slightest. *Rogue Agent* does contain some subtlety, but for the most part it's a relentless wave of virtual violence, as opposed to the original *GoldenEye's* spicy blend of stealth, gunplay and freeform espionage. It's a brick in the face; a sledgehammer swung without finesse but with a great deal of verve and enthusiasm; in short, it's all about mowing down legions of faceless bad guys in a seemingly unending hail of bullets.

> **"FOR THE MOST PART ROGUE AGENT IS A RELENTLESS WAVE OF VIRTUAL VIOLENCE"**

So, *Rogue Agent's* about shooting. And unless you can be bothered to indulge in the little

EYE SPY

Here's what you'll see with your technological marvel.

GOON FOR A LAUGH

Wave after wave of guards is your lot, but mowing them down five at a time with a machine gun is never less than satisfying. Until you've done it for the hundredth time.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Sadly, most of the scenery in Rogue Agent is indestructible, but that does mean that it makes good cover. However, certain things, such as bottles and computer screens, do explode particularly nicely when shot with a hoofing great gun. Mint!

EYE EYE

Your golden eye is not only a ploy to trade off the name of one of the best-loved games ever, but it gives you four funky abilities, selected using the D-pad. Apart from the shield, none are essential.

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

Tapping A when prompted will allow you to scale ladders or death-slide down ziplines. Rogue Agent keeps things simple, and you can only do certain things when you're told you can do them. Which is nice, but also adds to the linearity of the game as a whole.

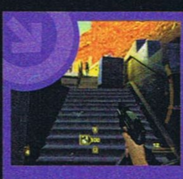
intricacies that are present – and much of the time it isn't really necessary at all – that's really *all* it's about. It's one-dimensional, simple and bound to provoke snorts of derision from those that can remember the gaming landscape being changed forever by the jaw-dropping appearance of Rare's classic. All of which makes EA's positive invitation of comparisons by shamelessly, *unforgivably*, appropriating the name all the more baffling.

But we're over the shock of that now. It's more constructive to dwell on what the game can offer today's breed of gamer; after all, *GoldenEye* is seven years old and a lot of gamers may never have played it. So it's best to get it out of the way now and treat *Rogue Agent* as a brand-new, if slightly unusual, entry into the Bond gaming canon.

The gimmick, of course, is that you don't play Bond this time around – no, this time you're the bad guy. The first level of the game has you attempting to foil Goldfinger's Fort Knox assault in updated 21st-century fashion. It sees you fighting for MI6 and eventually getting booted off the good guys' side for being too much of a homicidal maniac – and herein lies the key to *Rogue Agent's* constant gunplay. You're a bad, bad man, with too much of a liking for the red stuff.

After this you're employed by Goldfinger to be what amounts to the ultimate evil henchman, and his chum Scaramanga gives you your (wait for it) 'golden eye' after one of your normal peepers is shot out by Dr No. Convoluted? Yes. Steeped in Bond atmosphere? Yes. Well, mostly. For while the scene is set for a bad guy civil war that involves the most memorable nasty blokes from all the Bond movies, the fact that you're a bad guy fighting other bad guys for most of the time means that something essential is missing from the game (not least Commander Bond himself, although he does crop up).

However, there's a lot to be said for being evil. It's hard to see a game that has you playing as Bond being quite this vicious; every level is a relentless shootout from start to finish, and, in short bursts



STEALTHY DOES IT

It is possible to play Rogue Agent stealthily as you can use goons as human shields and play peekaboo with thugs by creeping around boxes. The game becomes a little more satisfying when played this way but there's really very little incentive to do so, so why bother?

△ This level is really frickin' annoying, as they've got tanks and you, well, haven't.

△ Oh, look – a dam level. What were the chances of that, eh?

A GAMBLING MAN

The Midas Casino level is pretty indicative of the nature of Rogue Agent's gunplay. It's all shoot, shoot, shoot. Which can be a good thing, but does get tiresome.



■ At the start you'll find Xenia Onatopp making a mess of things. She's working for Dr No, and is therefore your enemy. Sadly you can't kill her just yet.



■ No sooner has Xenia disappeared than the first of many goons arrive, quickly followed by this gunship. Luckily, there's a rocket launcher nearby. Handy.



■ After that it's down a few corridors with more goons. Dr No's thugs come in two types: cannon fodder in goggles and hardier armoured men. Use headshots on those.



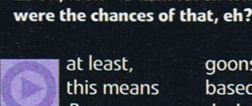
■ To get to the bottom floor of the casino, takes a few lift rides, complicated by more gunships. The best thing to do is crouch in a corner and wait 'til you get there.



■ Then it's on to the casino proper. Here you'll meet your first miniboss – named goons who often tout big guns and carry shield technology like that in your eye.



■ Then you descend to the basement, a section that ends with you defending a secret weapon. This is unnecessarily hard as enemies fire in from the outside. Nasty.

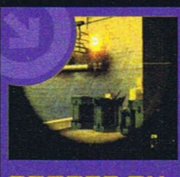


at least, this means *Rogue Agent* is visceral and murderously satisfying. A lot of this is down to the enemy AI – the legions of bad guys lead you on quite the merry dance, diving behind boxes, using cover, ducking out of the way of sniper rifles and generally being an enormous pain in the fundament. It's convincing stuff, and does necessitate use of cover and hit-and-run tactics, even if eventually the goons fall like chaff to your gun-based whirlwind. Adding to the duck-and-shoot gameplay is a *Halo*-type recharging health system, meaning you can retire to a quiet corner when you're about to snuff it and claw back some much-needed vitality. It's all decent stuff, and it works.

As does the two-gun system, another *Halo* steal. You can only ever carry two weapons, but you can wield them both at the same time (unless you're carrying a two-handed gun, like a rocket launcher). We found ourselves constantly chopping and changing weapons as the situation demanded, grabbing shotguns for close-up work and rocket launchers to take out groups of goons. Later weapons get as exotic as you'd expect in a game set in the Bond universe, our favourite being the pistol that fires remotely-detonated explosives. Great fun.

The end result is a game that can be mildly tactical, and the endless carnage is, at first, utterly cathartic. But the feeling soon wears off, because, as in EA stablemate *Lord of the Rings: The Third Age*, fighting is all there is. Play *Rogue Agent* for a day straight, as we did, and you'll become uncomfortably aware of the ultimately irritating one-dimensionality of the whole thing. Which brings us to the spurious reason for the title of the game; your bionic eye.

The golden eye is a gimmick, for sure, and impacts on the



SCORES ON THE DOORS

Doing certain things – getting flawless head shots, blowing people up, tossing villains off rooftops, that kind of thing – earns you points, as does general accuracy and several other criteria. Accruing enough points opens extras such as art and new multiplayer maps, and offers a bit of replay value.

△ In many ways *GoldenEye* is a bit like *Doom* or *Serious Sam*, offering constant shooting against endless streams of bad henchmen.

△ Your default pistol is utter rubbish, and you can't even empty the magazine by firing rapidly as you could in the original *GoldenEye*.

EYE'S RIGHT?

Your golden eye is peripheral as far as the gameplay goes. There's still fun to be had throwing enemies around with it. The 'hacking' ability is the least-good of its powers, offering console-hacking opportunities and rubbish weapon-jamming. Pah.







gunplay far less than you might imagine. Despite Christopher Lee himself – the movie Scaramanga – providing the voicework that tells you how your gadget works, it's ultimately inconsequential. Two of the four abilities it bestows are flimsy at best, the X-ray vision only working in conjunction with the Farsight-esque railgun, and the gun-jamming power being far more hassle than simply shooting a goon in the face with a shotgun.

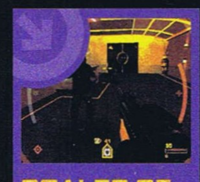
The final pair of eye abilities are more useful, the shield system being invaluable when you're up against it, and the *Second Sight*-like telekinesis power offering all sorts of entertaining body-throwage. But it all takes a back seat to the gunplay and is, in the final analysis, unsatisfying.

Which leaves us with a competent, occasionally thrilling shooter. It looks basic, at times, but this succeeds in keeping the game running with more fluidity than, say, *Everything or Nothing*. The multiplayer game is fun, if not earth-shattering, offering a wealth of maps and the addition of 'deathtraps' (which also feature in the single-player game), the most elaborate and comical being reserved for Scaramanga's Funhouse arena, although the Moonraker shuttle blast-pit is a firm favourite in the **NGC** office.

Forget the name; this isn't *GoldenEye*. This doesn't come anywhere close to that classic, and certainly won't change the face of the genre. What it is, however, is a solid blaster that entertains well enough in short doses. Played for longer sessions, though, *Rogue Agent* becomes repetitive, frustrating and something of a wasted opportunity to map an unexplored corner of the Bond universe.

JES BICKHAM

> **"THE GOLDEN EYE IMPACTS FAR LESS ON THE GUNPLAY THAN YOU MIGHT IMAGINE"**



SCALES OF JUSTICE

Scale is something of an issue in Rogue Agent. There are times when you seem far too close to the floor – one example being on the rooftops of Hong Kong, where a couple of doors that led outside seemed to have handles almost parallel with our line of sight. Is GoldenEye a midget? Or are the doors enormous?



- Gratifying gunplay.
- Decent multiplayer.
- Entertaining weapons.



- It's NOT *GoldenEye*.
- Repetitive.
- One-dimensional.



James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing
EA
NGC/91 68%
Partially successful third-person Bond extravaganza.



7 VISUALS
Great animation, dull textures and only perfunctory in places.

8 SOUNDS
Great Bond-esque music and some top voice-acting.

8 MASTERY
Throws millions of bullets around with a lack of slowdown.

8 LIFESPAN
Eight big levels and exhaustive multiplayer options.

VERDICT
Does bad-Bond gunplay very well but it's shallow and wearying in the long run, buttressed by some half-hearted gimmicks.

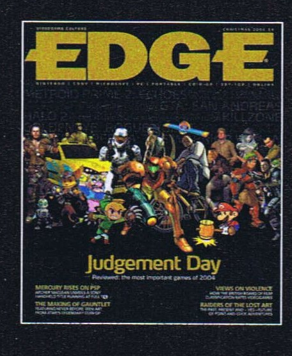
NGC 66

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The definitive reviews of Halo 2, GTA: San Andreas and Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

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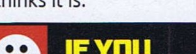




- Loads of customisation options.
- Lots of game hours.
- Two-player mode.



- Technically ropy.
- *Sooo* superficial.
- Not as cool as it thinks it is.

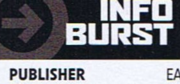




IF YOU LIKE THIS...

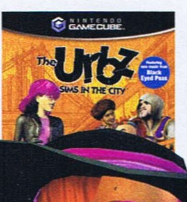
Animal Crossing
Nintendo
NGC/98 90%
Another 'life' sim – and it never tries to be anything but brilliant. No need for the loo either.



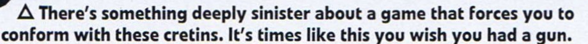


INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM. CARD PAGES	107
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40







△ There's something deeply sinister about a game that forces you to conform with these cretins. It's times like this you wish you had a gun.



THE URBZ
SIMS IN THE CITY

EA's moronic dress-'em-up hits the city.

If you've read our previews for this, you may have noticed our contempt for the game as we saw it. There's nothing we dislike more than manufactured 'cool', and we *hate* having it rammed down our throats. Whether it's EA's highly irritating 'Trax' or their insistence on injecting 'bling' into everything from *Need For Speed* to *Def Jam*, it leaves a bad taste in our mouths. *The Urbz*, however, takes things to a new level.

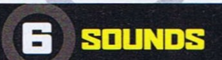
Fundamentally, the game is pretty sound. It plays like a more streamlined version of *The Sims*. You have to ensure your character stays clean, uses the toilet and eats and sleeps whenever they need to. The emphasis this time round, though, is on social interaction and building your reputation in each of the city's districts. These areas are based around your usual urban stereotypes. Punks, beatniks, skaters, bikers, cliquey celeb-types… To be successful in each area you have to dress like them, act like them and interact with them by using the correct 'social moves' – sickeningly named special behaviours (like 'Euro Kiss') that you earn as you gain more of a reputation. Underlying all this are the familiar *Sims* elements like earning money in jobs so you can decorate your apartment, buy new clothes and other pointless trinkets.

While the changes EA have made are undoubtedly an improvement (you now interact with your job by stabbing at button prompts and you don't need the loo *quite* so often) we have to admit that the overall experience has left us rather cold. There are plenty of game hours in here, but it simply isn't rewarding enough. It's all so superficial. There aren't any characters in the game that you feel you actually *like* – and after watching your Sim behave like a complete idiot in varying locations, desperately trying to fit in with his posse of loathsome digital losers, you'll soon start to wonder why you're wasting your time with this. There doesn't seem to be any point to it all. So why on earth should you bother playing?

GERAINT EVANS

> **"THERE AREN'T ANY CHARACTERS IN THAT YOU FEEL YOU ACTUALLY LIKE"**

7 VISUALS
The models and animation improve on previous Sims.



6 SOUNDS
Babbling sim-speak, daft effects and truly annoying 'music'.



5 MASTERY
A clunky interface – and some stinking loading times.

7 LIFESPAN
Hundreds of things to play with – but will you *want* to?

VERDICT
Why engage in such a soulless experience just so you can achieve the dubious status of King of the Pillocks?





NGC 58


REVIEW UK
"Made the successful transition to 3D"

NGC ON THE DVD VIDEO

NGC STAR GAME

METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

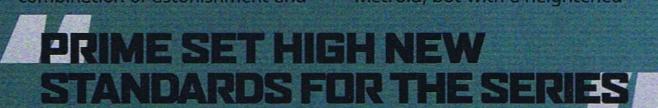
Hiking boots at the ready. Samus returns for a walk on the dark side…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	RETRO STUDIOS
RELEASE DATE	26TH NOV
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



We'll admit that our enthusiasm for *Echoes* has ebbed and flowed since we first saw a very early demo at E3 a couple of years ago. Strange, because we met its predecessor with a combination of astonishment and



euphoria, due, in part, to the realisation that Retro Studios had turned a title rumoured to be a mess (so much so that Miyamoto himself had declined to show it at E3 three years ago) into one of the major triumphs of 2003.

Prime did for the Metroid series what *Mario 64* did for Mario, and what *Ocarina of Time* did for Zelda – it took a series that had been firmly rooted in 2D and made the successful transition to 3D, pleasing long-term fans and newcomers alike. With the leap in technology came the same old Metroid, but with a heightened sense of wonder created through exploration – and we absolutely lapped it up.

But was *Prime* a rod for Metroid's back? It rejuvenated and set high new standards for the series – and any later instalments would have an awful lot to live up to…



THE HUNTER RETURNS





△ VISOR

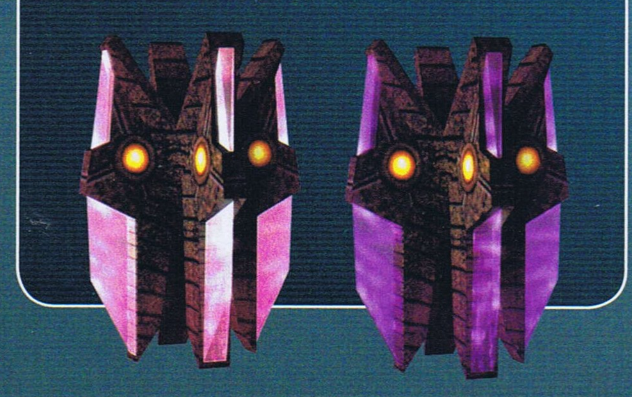
The Combat visor is your normal view. The Scan visor now colours any scannable items to let you know whether they've been scanned. The Dark visor allows you to see invisible objects, enemies and targetable key points, like door locks, and the Echo visor enables you to 'see' sound – essential for activating sonar-based technology and finding hidden upgrades.

△ ARM CANNON

There are four different beams for this beauty. The weapon you begin with is the basic Power beam. However, unlike in Prime, you get to keep its charge function from the beginning – which is pretty handy, as one charged shot is pretty much equal to a missile blast. Later on you acquire the Dark beam (great for taking on normal enemies), the Light beam (excellent against Dark foes) and the ultra-powerful Annihilator.

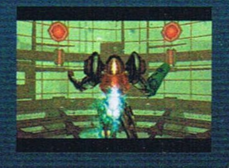
▽ AMMUNITION

New to the series is the concept of ammunition. Both the Light and Dark beams require it to function, which means you have to be much more careful how freely you use your cannon than before. We wouldn't recommend, for example, coming up against a Dark Boss only to find you don't have any Light ammo left.



△ GRAVITY BOOST

This chunky attachment more or less replaces the Gravity Suit Samus used in Metroid Prime. It basically allows you to travel at normal speeds through water, letting you jump and move as you would on dry land. It also has an extra bonus of a third, levitating, jump, which enables you to get even more height. Unfortunately, this bonus only functions underwater.



METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES

Bring some Light into your life



△ GRAPPLE BEAM

Pleasingly, this plays a bigger part in the game than it did in Prime. It enables you to latch on to grapple points and swing your way over big gaps. It's essential for finding many of the missile upgrades, and proves a really handy way of getting around quickly.

▽ BOOTS

The space boots are among the most useful items. They basically give you an extra jump in mid air, letting you cross big gaps and traverse the game world faster. Later you'll also earn the screw attack, which works differently than in previous Metroids, *allowing you to bounce up walls, but without the ability to boost vertically at will.*

△ MISSILES

Samus' arm cannon doubles up as a missile launcher. As well as Prime's *Super Missiles you can upgrade to the Seeker, which can unleash a volley of five missiles at different targets at once (or the same one, if you prefer). This is good for doors that have multiple activation points. You can also add a missile function to your beam weapons if you find the right upgrade. The Dark beam, for example, has the power to unleash a devastating black orb – it makes swift work of Light world bosses.*

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

It's a game of two halves. Let us take you on a journey to the dark side…

CHANGING ROOMS



■ The planet of Aether is torn between two parallel dimensions. The Light world is losing – until Samus turns up.



■ Samus can travel between the worlds using portals. Some are permanent, others shut down once she's travelled through.

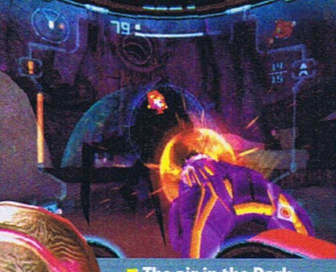


■ The Dark world areas are pretty much the same as those in the Light world, only much more barren and ravaged.



■ Some things, like switches, exist in a state of flux and need activating in one world for an effect in the other.

BUBBLE TROUBLE



■ The air in the Dark world takes Samus' energy rapidly.



■ The Luminoth placed crystals there to help in the war. These project bubbles that create a haven against the Dark air.



■ There are also temporary bubbles that can be created by blasting floating energy orbs using your arm cannon.

POSSESSED



■ The Light and Dark worlds, for the most part, have different enemies. Light's monsters are usually easier to cope with.



■ Even in the Light world, you're not safe. Dark matter slips through the rift and possesses the monsters.





THE LUMINOTH

The original inhabitants of Aether. They're similar to the Chozo in terms of their age and technology. You'll bump into a few of them from time to time and even see corpses of their comrades. They hold snippets of Luminoth lore for you to read up on.

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES

Bring some Light into your life



In order to save the Light world Samus must invade the Dark dimension and retrieve Light energy from the temples.



Samus needs three keys to gain access to each Dark temple. Once they're found she has to face off against a guardian.



Samus must then absorb the stolen Light energy and take it back to the equivalent Light world temple.



The light of Aether is slowly restored. In one place it stops raining, while in another, the desert shows signs of life.



Progress means hopping between bubbles. Fighting in them proves tough, as you can't stray too far from safety.



When you get the Dark Suit it doesn't make you invulnerable to the atmosphere but it does slow the rate of damage.



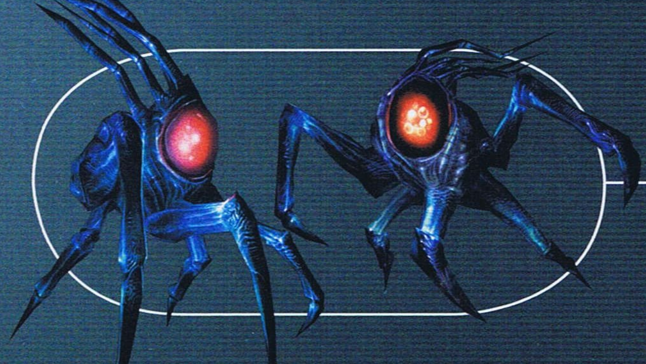
Charge the bubbles with Light to make them deadly to foes.



This turns them into Dark versions of themselves – making them, in some cases, over ten times tougher to defeat.

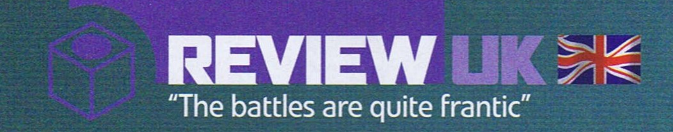


If you want a 100% scan rate, scan the monsters in both forms as the game treats them as two separate species.



THE ING

These inhabit the Dark world and have almost wiped out the Luminoth. They have the ability to possess Light-world creatures and can transform into a purple liquid to evade your fire. They've stolen the Luminoth's Light energy and stored it inside their temples.



LOCK AND LOAD

Metroid multiplayer'll never work, they said – but they were wrong…

△ MODES
When the game begins you have access to three separate arenas and two different game modes, a standard Deathmatch mode and a Bounty mode. There's not much in the way of choice of characters and colours. Which is a shame.

◁ DEATHMATCH
The Deathmatch mode actually proves far more enjoyable than we originally thought it would be. Battles don't actually degenerate into tedious, perpetually locked-on strafe-a-thons as we first feared, with plenty of tactics available to you, like dashing, jumping and morphballing (which allows you to free yourself from an enemy lock).

△ VARIETY PACK
There are a number of great additions to the locations that help spice up the action and make it more than plain vanilla shooting. There are cannons that propel you into the air and across levels, plus grapple points for you to swing yourself up or across on. There are even huge, deadly gun turrets to fight over – complete with a handy bomb slot so you can get rid of anyone hogging them.

△ MO' MONEY
Bounty mode is currently our favourite game in multiplayer. Each player begins with a set amount of coins. The object of the game is to collect as many as you can before the timer runs out. Hitting or killing opponents knocks coins out of them that you then have to fight over to collect. As you'd expect, the person with the most moolah at the end wins the battle.

▷ FAST AND FURIOUS
While not exactly in the same league as TimeSplitters 2, like Free Radical's title Echoes offers a very different multiplayer experience than you would expect. Thanks to the lock-on feature, your morph ball capabilities and the abundance of weaponry, the battles are quite frantic and as intense as anything the likes of GoldenEye: Rogue Agent has to offer – albeit it with a smaller set of options.

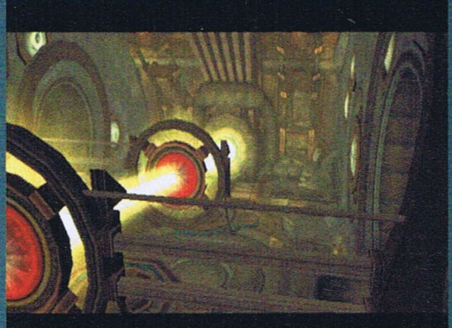
◁ POWER!
One feature we particularly like is the random power-up element, which gives you invisibility or invincibility and powers that can either aid or hamper you in battle. We also appreciate the fact that even without power-ups skilled players can still hold their own in a scrap – we reckon the power-ups help the overall balance of the experience.

THE NEW BLACK
Meet Dark Samus. She doesn't play quite as big a part in the game as we hoped she might, only appearing at odd moments. Who is she? Why does she have a fascination with Phazon? Will she forge an alliance with the Space Pirates..? Well, that'd be telling, wouldn't it…



BRAIN AGAINST THE MACHINE

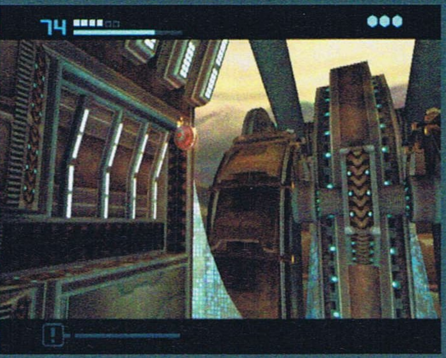
Echoes is crammed with room-filling ancient machines.


This room houses a portal that you need to power up to use. How do you do it? By working your way around the walls in morph ball form, aligning giant lenses on your way to focus the sun's energy and bring on the power.

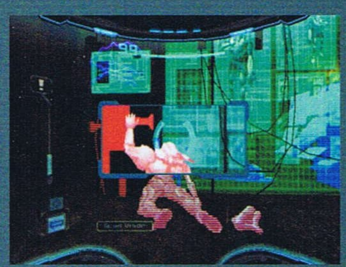

No machine is too big to be included in Echoes – here the entire floor of this temple forms a puzzle where you must align plates to open up a security barrier that hides a vital piece of Luminoth technology.


The central core of the Sanctuary never fails to amaze us. It's essentially a huge glowing orb suspended in the air with gigantic metal hoops that wheel around it. If you stop them, maybe you can walk on them…

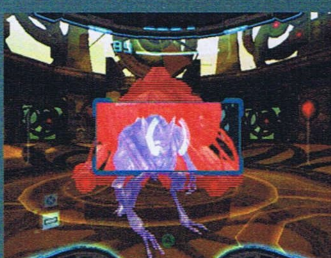

One of our favourites, this. It's a giant wheeling dynamo with little grooves in each hoop. You need to stop them in the correct order so that the grooves line up, letting your morph ball slip through.


Some machines span multiple rooms and have a number of switches that perform different tasks. Here, you have a huge spinning drill mounted on a crane that you're going to have to manoeuvre into position.


There's a satisfying feeling of weight behind some of the machines' components too. You can, for example, really feel Samus' boost ball struggling to shift the bulk of heavy metal doors and plates.









SCAN AGAIN

And there's a lot more of it too…

One of the biggest gripes people had with *Prime* was the incessant scanning that had to be done. It's back again – and helping unfold the story as it did before. Thankfully, things have been made much easier. Scanning points are now obvious, showing up as blocks of colour rather than inconspicuous icons. Also, while there's more in the way of background text (like Trooper and Pirate Logs and Luminoth Lore) to read, it's not as intrusive. You're told it's been placed in your suit's log and you can read it at your leisure. It's worth going through, as the logs reveal some of the history of the Metroid universe.





THE BIGGER THE BETTER

As always, the bosses are Metroid's biggest asset.

▽ QUADRAXIS

And the award for the most ridiculously large boss in the world goes to… Seriously, there's really no need for a boss this big, but Retro have delivered a whopper. When you initially see it, it's only half constructed. In the Dark world, however, it's a a gigantic walking insect-like machine that guards the Light energy in one of the temples.





△ BLOGG

An underwater encounter with a ten-foot fish with a gaping spiny hole for a mouth. Typically, it's only vulnerable when it's at its most dangerous – charging straight for you. Power up that Dark beam missile upgrade you found (you did find it, didn't you?) and pray like mad you can dodge out of the way.

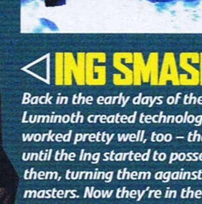






▽ CHYKKA

A terrifying dance of death on a wobbly plate in the middle of a toxic ocean. From the whale-like larvae hatches a gigantic poison-spitting moth that cracks open your platform, forcing you to grapple you way through the air like a metal monkey. Difficult.





◁ ING SMASHER

Back in the early days of the war between the worlds, the Luminoth created technology to defeat their enemy. They worked pretty well, too – that is, until the Ing started to possess them, turning them against their masters. Now they're in the hands of the enemy and intent on smashing you to pieces.

The original *Metroid Prime* wasn't without its critics, moaners more than willing to cite a shopping list of 'issues' explaining why it wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Backtracking was the main bone of contention, and respawning enemies, incessant scanning and the controversial lock-on system (or rather, lack of dual analogue control) were factors that irritated as many people as they appealed to. It's safe to say that *Prime's* detractors won't welcome their return.

We'll leave the lock-on system out of this argument – if you fully understand the system, you'll know that without it many aspects of the game, like rapid switching between cannon modes and even some of the more complex boss scenarios, wouldn't be possible if you had to aim manually. The backtracking, however, is a little harder to appreciate and, unfortunately, constantly retracing your steps in *Echoes* is inevitable.

To be fair, it's not quite as bad as it was in *Prime*. Retro seem to have constructed the environments and placed the key items in such a way as to reduce the amount of unnecessary journey time. However, on the occasions where you get stuck, you'll still find yourself wandering around in the game world desperately looking for a way forward. Walking this way and that along the length and breadth of the levels, searching for a crack in a wall, a door you previously missed – anything that points towards a way forward – will try even the most patient gamer. We'd love to say it's not the case, but on more than one occasion we ended up checking the map, feeling the pit of our stomach turn sour at the prospect of a ten minute (plus) detour.

But then this is Metroid. Dragging yourself across familiar terrain for an extra five missiles, energy tank or some virgin territory is part and parcel of the experience. Without the 'lows' you can't fully appreciate the thrill of discovering the unknown, the challenge of another energy-sapping boss or the reward of an empowering upgrade. These 'highs', which cap the emotional peaks of *Echoes*, prove to be the



60HZ WARNING

You may know this already, but we thought we should say it again. METROID PRIME 2 CAN ONLY BE PLAYED ON TELEVISIONS CAPABLE OF DISPLAYING 60Hz. As long as your television is fairly new you should be okay. Test your TV out with another 60Hz-compatible game before you buy.

ROLLIN' ROLLIN' ROLLIN'
Samus' ability to roll up into a sphere has been exploited more than ever in *Echoes* – with some fiendish puzzles to get your head around.

KEEP ON TRACK
Old favourites like the the boost ball (which allows you to navigate half pipes) and the wall climbing spider ball are back with a vengeance.

BALLS OF STEEL
Samus' twin bomb attacks return. These combine with her spider and boost ball to make the morph ball a formidable weapon.

A MAZE-ING
One of the most imaginative uses is a boss encounter in a series of mazes. Time your attacks and activate gates to guide it to its doom.

△ These new morph ball cannons will, once activated, launch you over huge gaps and up inaccessible cliff faces. Dead useful.



△ When you first land on Aether, Samus finds corpses of federation troops littering the base.



△ This Pirate has been infected by Dark Ing Matter – the result is a brutally tough opponent.



△ The Space Pirates are, as usual, on the hunt for more Phazon, which is found in the Dark world.

game's lifeblood and, unlike in *Prime* they come thicker and faster and are more evenly paced. You never go for long without finding something of use and, consequently, the game is more intense. This feels nowhere near as laid back as its predecessor.

Take the Ing's purple-black dimension, for example. It's a deeply foreboding place. The atmosphere feels thick and toxic and its energy-sapping nature fills you with a sense of urgency as you keep one eye out for pockets of safety and another on your ever-decreasing energy supply.

It certainly unsettling, we'll give it that – but we'd be lying if we said that, during the first third of the game, we didn't feel a little let down by it all. Sure, the astonishingly high production values were all in place, the tense atmosphere and feelings of solitude were all present and correct and there were plenty of moments of invention but, despite its clever use of the Light and Dark worlds, it felt as though we'd never left the world of *Prime*. All the emotions that we felt in *Prime* were the same in *Echoes*. Only one thing was missing. That feeling of surprise and unbridled joy at being faced with a stunning vista or witnessing a jaw-dropping set piece. *Prime* really delivered here, mainly through the stark contrast between its locations. Phendrana, Magmoor, Tallon, the Phazon Mines – all were completely different.

In *Echoes*, much of your time is spent in the Dark world in each location, which means a great deal of time spent wandering around a dark purple landscape. It doesn't matter if it's a dark purple version of a desert, a swamp or a temple. It's still purple and it still exudes the same atmosphere as the last



HACKING

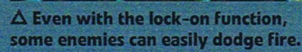
Not limited to the multiplayer, some enemies in the Sanctuary Fortress have the power to hack your suit. This causes your view to be disrupted by static and, in a rather disorientating effect, the frame rate dips dramatically. To get back to normal, 'reboot' your suit by holding the triggers and tapping B.

"THE ATMOSPHERE'S ENERGY-SAPPING NATURE FILLS YOU WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY"



"Overwhelming you with scale and imagination"





△ Even with the lock-on function, some enemies can easily dodge fire.



△ Pirates have set up labs all over Aether but they too are under attack.



△ Even the mini-bosses are impressive. This guardian is big, but nowhere near as huge as some of the others.



△ As you progress, certain enemies make themselves invisible to some of your visors.

purple location you were in. At times, playing through *Echoes'* dark world can feel a little tiring. This aspect isn't helped by the rather uninspiring way that the game presents its opening objectives. Go to a temple. Find three keys. Bring three keys back. Fight boss. Next? Er, go to a temple. Find three more keys. Bring keys back… oh look! Another boss. *Great.* Surely Retro could have come up with something a little less predictable. Something a little more inspiring to drive the game on? Maybe, but just as you starting to get irritated, Retro pull out all the stops.

After the second key-hunt things pick up when you're instructed to head to a cliff fortress. On reaching it, you're made to see what the game's been trying to show you all along – only it's been too subtle and too shy to shout about it. You reach a bridge, heavily defended by some seriously nasty Elite Pirates. Looming high into the air on the far side is the Fortress itself. A gigantic behemoth of a building that, in terms of level architecture, is so complex, so intricate, and so utterly brain-cooking that it's enough to make level designers the world over hang their heads in shame. Spider ball tracks thread and weave their way over the



BACK CHAT

In the early stages of the game you find corpses of Federation Troopers that have been overwhelmed by the Ing. We particularly like the way some of their logs cross reference each other and, in one instance, talk about Samus us though they don't believe she exists – like she's the heroine in a fairy tale.

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES

Bring some Light into your life



△ Some enemies prove more annoying than dangerous.



△ This three-headed worm is your first major boss encounter.



△ The environments are vast and always very impressive.



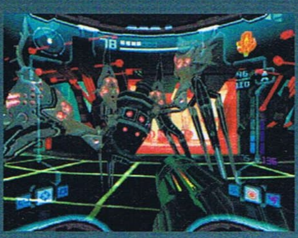










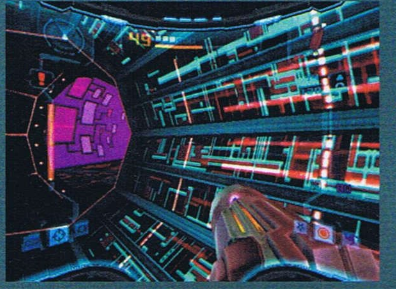




△ The addition of the Federation Troopers and their logs adds a more rounded dimension to the Metroid universe, making you feel as though you're coming in to pick up the pieces of a raging conflict.



△ If you activate bubbles with your Light beam you can kill enemies instantly.



△ Nothing is spared detail: even the walls are brought to life with animated textures.



△ The charged Dark beam delivers lovely globules of matter into enemies' faces.

bridge, angular spires puncture a sky where subtle neon traces rain their way up into the heavens. Inside, huge, ancient dynamos wheel their way around rooms, holographic displays flicker, gigantic robotic enemies patrol the corridors – everything is alive and delivers as strong a sense of awe as *Prime* ever did.

And so it continues. Harmless-looking level furniture that you previously scanned awakens. Long-dormant guardians smashing their way through corridors discharge thunderous attacks at you. Complex and ingenious puzzles spanning multiple rooms perplex, before yielding huge rewards, and enemies, machines and weapons unleash unholy pyrotechnics as though your Gamecube had some kind of point to prove. Slowly you see the sprawling treasure chest of Aether open up before you, overwhelming you with scale and imagination. And through it all you guide Samus, from the debilitating first encounter with Dark Samus to the final confrontations with the Ing, arming her as you go with Chozo and Luminoth technology, until she's a silent killing machine.

Yes, it takes a little while to get going, there's no disputing that, but then we suppose that's the point of Metroid isn't it? Much like in *Prime* there's a real sense of journey here. As the game slowly progresses you get a gradual feeling of empowerment as you become more familiar with your weapons, skills and the growing environment – and you gain an overwhelming swelling of pride as you overcome the game's tougher mental challenges. In this respect, *Echoes* is an adventure of unquestionable majesty.

GERAINT EVANS

HIDE & SEEK

Once again, the barometer for game completion revolves around the number of key items and upgrades collected, as well as the number of scans you collect from the game world. The higher your completion rate, the longer the sequence you get at the game's end. You'll also receive a bonus for your scan rate…

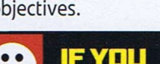
"EVERYTHING IS ALIVE AND DELIVERS AS STRONG A SENSE OF AWE AS PRIME EVER DID"



- Unbelievably good level design.
- Atmospheric game world.



- Takes a little while to get going.
- Some unimaginative objectives.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Metroid Prime
Nintendo
NGC/79, 97%
Another, very similar, adventure that's not quite as dark in tone.





9 VISUALS

Loads of beautiful effects and huge, detailed levels.



8 SOUNDS

Blork, bleep. Pretty forgettable tunes, but they set the tone.



9 MASTERY

Bosses unlike anything you've ever seen. Level architecture to die for.

8 LIFESPAN

Lasts under a week of *solid* play – but the multiplayer's a bonus.

VERDICT

A darker, harder and denser beast than *Prime*, it doesn't show its colours easily – but when it does, it truly shines.



NGC 94

"Neve ly exc

△ He's not as hateful as Crash but he's no Mario.

△ The extra characters make *Spyro: A Hero's Tail* halfway acceptable.

△ A big pink momma dragon, yesterday. Predictably, you have to help her find her eggs, which have been stolen. Ain't that always the way? Yes. Yes it is.

SPYRO: A HERO'S TAIL

Small dragon seeks gamer to love him. No luck yet.



PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
DEVELOPER	EUROCOM
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	20
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





lthough never as odious as the boggle-eyed Crash Bandicoot, Spyro the dragon has always left us a little bit cold.

He's just so… *pleasant*. Innocuous. Cutesy. *Purple*. While it might sound a bit rich coming from a magazine that celebrates a fat little plumber as videogamingdom's biggest star, the little dragon's never really excited us. And his latest adventure, *A Hero's Tail*, definitely doesn't do anything to buck the trend.

It is, quite plainly, meant for the younger end of the games market, sporting unchallenging platforming action and endless gem-collecting fetch-quests leavened with some variety-injecting minigames

It's nothing you haven't seen before, wrapped up in a child-friendly primary-coloured package, and we can't think of anyone over 12 wanting to consciously play this.

But despite its blandness, this is a well-constructed game. Honestly. *A Hero's Tail* might steal everything from Nintendo's Big Book Of 3D Platformers, which was written around the same time *Super Mario 64* was released, but if it were a machine it would be a decidedly well-oiled one.

Collecting things is the order of the day, and while the main thrust of the game concerns collecting crystals and destroying Dark Gems, there are also dragon eggs and other such distractions to ferret out, with central hub areas giving you a route to new places once you've snagged any new abilities or items that allow you to progress.

It's efficiently tooled stuff that, while unlikely to tax your frontal lobes in any way, is logically and pleasingly designed. Of most interest, perhaps, are the four playable characters other than Spyro, our favourite being a chubby little flying penguin called Sergeant Byrd. Controlling these characters takes the form of elaborate minigames, and these offer a welcome change of pace to Spyro's own routine of exploring and collecting.

Even so, while *A Hero's Tail* remains a model of sensible game design and slick good looks, it never excited us once. But your little brother might love it to bits.

JES BICKHAM

> **"NOTHING YOU HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE, WRAPPED UP IN A PRIMARY-COLOURED PACKAGE"**

△ Sergeant Byrd in full effect. Flying is fun, but ultimately shallow.



- Cheery.
- Simple to play.
- Extra characters.



- Entirely unoriginal.
- Strictly for the under-12s.



Crash Bandicoot The Wrath of Cortex
Vivendi
NGC/75 40%
A main character made of evil and a game to match.





Pastel hues and comically animated monsters.



Every bit as cute and cloying on the ears as you'd expect.



Well-constructed but we've seen this kind of thing before.



For kids, it'll last; for grown-ups, a weekend or so.

VERDICT

Polished and eminently playable, there's nonetheless something pedestrian about the purple dragon.



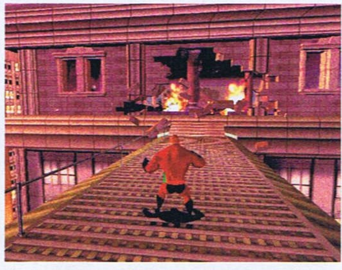


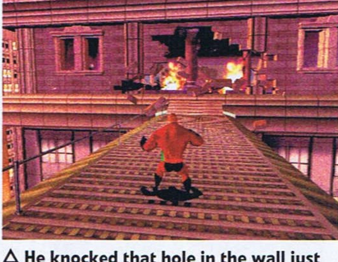


△ Mr Incredible spends another fruitless afternoon looking for Violet. She's invisible, see? Ha ha. Ha. The truth is less interesting. Here, Mr Incredible prepares to punch yet another gang of weak villains.



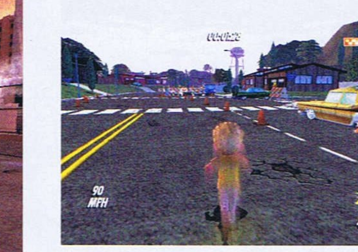
△ A small child running at 67mph? That's nothing for the super-speedy Dash boy.

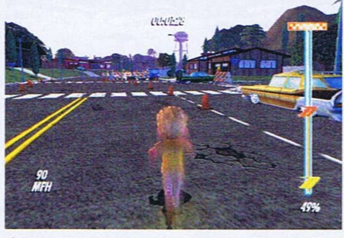




△ He knocked that hole in the wall just by giving it a mean stare. What a guy.







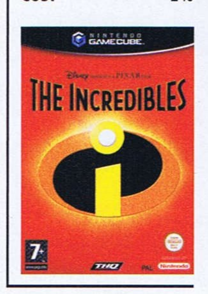
△ Any faster than this and Dash actually explodes in a cloud of blood and hair.

THE INCREDIBLES

It's a double helping of platform blandness.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	HEAVY IRON
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



Domestic superheroes struggling to come to terms with a world that's left the lycra-clad vigilante behind. From Miracle Man to Watchmen and beyond, the theme's a staple of the knowing, nerdy comic book – and in the hands of the people behind Finding Nemo, the basis for an amusingly adult animated movie.

But as a videogame, it's yet another 3D platformer. Surprise, surprise, you lucky people. Forget all the hype about console-based violence – the relevant authorities should bring in some legislation to ban this sort of uninspired, unoriginal rubbish.

You get four characters from the film: strong man Mr Incredible; his stretchy Mrs; invisible child Violet; and speedy schoolboy Dash. Each one has multiple 'Incredi-Actions' which you can use to mess with the relentless hordes of bad guys they encounter around every corner. You'll love using powers such as the Incredi-Turn, in which heavy objects can be picked up, then put down facing *an entirely different direction.*

Mrs Incredible can pluck flying baddies out of the sky and chuck them into other flying baddies, so her stages tend to involve repeatedly pressing one button. An auto-fire controller helps reduce the monotony.

There aren't too many taxing fights to complete before you're back where you were, ready to face instant death once more.

The four characters are reasonably different in terms of their super powers, but since most of their abilities are completely redundant except at specific points in the game, they tend to feel very samey to play.

> **"BATTLES CAN BE WON BY TAPPING BUTTONS WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE SCREEN"**

Much of the action involves fighting enemies who are just there to get in your way. Battles can often be completed by tapping the buttons without even looking at the screen, which is handy for the many occasions when a hidden trap or dodgy camera moment does for your Incredible and sends you back to the last checkpoint.

While *The Incredibles* is far from the worst game in its crowded genre, it's so crushingly ordinary as to be virtually invisible. And no amount of funny dialogue and movie clips can make it worth spending £40 on. Go and see the film instead. It'll probably last a lot longer than this.

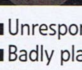
MARTIN KITTS



- Clips from the Pixar movie.
- Okayish graphics.



- Unresponsive.
- Badly placed save points.
- Repetitive.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Jimmy Neutron
THQ
NGC/78 18%
Utterly minging platformer for people who hate games. Or your worst enemy.



6 VISUALS
Looks a lot like the film, in a bland, brown sort of way.

6 SOUNDS
Comedy hero voices and 'action' music soon wear thin.

4 MASTERY
Ordinary in almost every way, which is a feat in itself.

4 LIFESPAN
Gets boring long before the game's 18 levels are up.



VERDICT
Lucky for Disney that dull console games don't seem to affect the performance of big movies at the box office.



DÉJÀ VU

Yes, we tried to get into Link's latest excursion last issue, but were foiled by the evil that was the E3 demo. So it gets a short review this time round, and it's got a score to boot.

More importantly, our lowest score ever has been handed out this issue. Which GBA title takes the 'honours'?

NGC THIS IS HANDHELD HEAVEN

GBA REVIEWS

△ Link shrinks himself down for a closer look at some, er, shoes.

△ We've been kind enough to pop a little of the old Rink on our DVD. Have a look in the Bonus Features section on the disc and find yourself getting all tempted…

LEGEND OF ZELDA MINISH CAP

The same old Rinky-Dink – now with a dollop of added shrink.

NGC ON THE DVD VIDEO

NGC STAR GAME

At the end of **NGC**/100's extended preview, we suggested that this would indeed be another classic slice of 2D Zelda. Unfortunately, after the first 20 minutes or so you get the feeling that it's all too familiar.

You have to send Link out on a quest to collect a bunch of elemental stones. You have to push blocks onto switches and defeat all the enemies in a room for that inimitable chime and a small key to open chest X or door Y. Could it be that Zelda's tried-and-tested motifs are starting to get stale? In a way, yes – but this *is* Zelda. You know what you're buying into as soon as you hand over the cash. It's the bits you weren't expecting that really draw you in. Those little moments of magic that remind you why Link has been on top of his game for over a decade.

There's an abundance of these. Take the Link-shrinking Minish Cap, for example. It's the game's main hook, binding many of the best puzzles together but it's also the reason for the vividly realised two worlds, with Link's 'normal-sized' world giving way to detailed areas where everyday objects tower above our hero. Mini-Link can pick up giant seeds and move them to new locations (later to be watered by 'big Link'). You can enter barrels and spin them around like a hamster wheel, and creatures that big Link would have little trouble dispatching are seen as gigantic bosses. *Minish Cap* rarely fails to surprise.

It's not just the duality of these worlds that makes the game, though. It's the little things, like the Magic Jar. This works like a vacuum and can be used to interact with the scenery. It'll hoover up dust, for example, and can suck up fields of bushes in one go. The hidden 'Kinstones' not only make you explore, but the reward you get when you find a pair is truly satisfying.

So yes, this still feels like Zelda – nothing much has changed. But it it also still puts a broad smile on you face. Nothing's changed *there* either.

GERAINT EVANS

△ Through here you'll find the entrance to the first of the game's six dungeons.

△ Find a bottle, fill it with water and grow plants to climb up the mountain.



△ The Magic Jar lets you shot out air that propels the leaf like a little boat.



△ Yay! It's a good old-fashioned chicken hunt! Mind the brown slippery one.





DID YOU KNOW? Capcom's first foray into the world of *Zelda* came with the quite excellent *Oracle of Ages* and *Oracle of Seasons* games on GBC. They're pretty cheap if you can find them.















△ Here's a better idea. Why don't you go home, smell a few flowers, stroke a few puppies. You know, real manly stuff, like.

GTA ADVANCE

It's tough on the streets when you're trying to run a PC game on a GBA…



Ever since *Mario 64* made the leap, bringing 2D games into the third dimension has been one of the software industry's favourite pastimes. But can it work the other way round? If you strip the graphics from an ambitious current-gen title, will anyone want to play it in a bare-bones format on hardware that's technologically on a par with the SNES?

Grand Theft Auto Advance takes that backward step, bringing Liberty City from *GTA III* to a handheld. It has the look of the original PC game and some of the structure of the more recent 3D versions. And it comes as no surprise to find that it's nowhere near as entertaining as its big brothers.

Large sprites, an overhead perspective and the GBA's wide screen heap frustration on anyone hoping to speed around the city in a fast car. You can't see far enough ahead to steer around other cars before you hit them. And you crash if you scrape a single pixel of their paintwork. Sometimes you crash without actually hitting anything, so you can forget about squeezing through gaps in the traffic at any kind of speed.

> "HAS THE LOOK OF THE ORIGINAL PC GAME AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE RECENT 3D VERSIONS"

Even if you could see corners before they were a few metres ahead of your vehicle, the jerkiness of the graphics makes precision manoeuvres impossible. The buildings have a perspective effect and the screen zooms out a little when you drive fast, both of which are nice effects; both of which appear to be beyond the capabilities of the GBA. There's little to do or see outside the missions, and when the illusion of being in a living city is shattered, *GTA's* core gameplay is exposed as a set of extended *Crazy Taxi* challenges with clunky controls.

This isn't the kind of thing GBA was ever meant to handle, and it shows. Perhaps somebody could make a DS version in an effort to bring something new to the series – the second screen might also let you zoom along for more than ten seconds without hitting a wall of solid annoyance.

GERAINT EVANS



△ If you want to spend hours being someone's errand boy, go ahead…

INFO BURST

FROM	ROCKSTAR
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

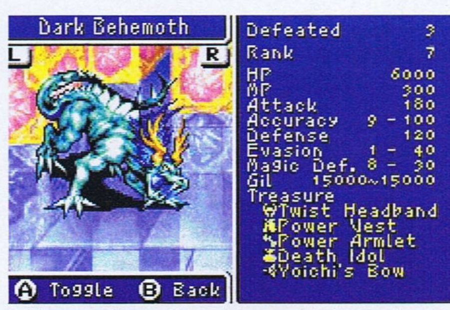
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

62



△ Ranks and ranks of enemies just jumping in and out.


△ Not exactly the sauciest looking of games, is it?



△ View enemies you've encountered in the bestiary.

FINAL FANTASY I & II DAWN OF SOULS

A little slice of history in the palm of your hand.


Much like *Phantasy Star Collection*, these two RPGs aren't going to tempt you with visual splendour. Granted, the graphics have been given something of a makeover (which is a damn sight more than *PSC*'s games got) but there's no escaping the fact that they look like a pair of early 16-bit games.

You won't find much in the way of gameplay revelations here either. These are very early RPGs, remember – employing only the most tired (by today's standards) elements and nothing more. There are no 'clever' battle tactics, not much in the way of sidequests and certainly nothing approaching an original storyline. (Burning villages anyone?)

Still, we suppose it's not exactly the games' fault. They did, in many respects, lay down the foundations of the modern RPG and, as a result, are better viewed as pieces of history rather than as standalone games.

Suffice to say, then, they've long since been surpassed. If you're a fan of *Golden Sun*, for example, we wouldn't dream of suggesting you dive in and tackle these – if you're not a hardcore RPG fan, you're bound to get bored. The stories are nothing new, the battle system is basic, offering little in terms of breadth or depth, and the payoff for persevering with them is slight.

However, you may be one of those perverse gamers who *will* love them. You won't mind levelling up out of necessity hour after hour. You won't mind walking over bland environments and equally bland dungeons and you'll get a real kick out of the fact that you've played and finished them, boosting your personal sense of RPG pride. Geraint, for example, broke his brain completing *PSC* even though he'd already played and finished the games before, feverishly sketching out maps on graph paper and cackling like a goblin every time some 'numbers got a bit bigger' or the next shop had a 'more powerful sword'.

If you can empathise with that kind of obsessive behaviour then go for it – jump right in and savour the ghosts of RPGs past. Every last crude-looking pixel. Everyone else will probably just give up on *Dawn of Souls* after the first, repetitive half hour.

GERAINT EVANS









TRON 2.0

Remember the film? You're either rather old or fibbing…


This really isn't a bad effort. It's an isometric adventure based on Tron, with the bulk of the action taking place in the neon digital landscape. Here it's simply a case of fulfilling some basic platforming tasks and getting info from the NPCs dotted around the place, as well as dispatching all manner of enemies with that stupid Frisbee-type thing.

Breaking up the action at intervals are different game modes. There are 3D FPS-style sections where you have to commandeer a ground-based tank or an airborne 'Recogniser' and battle enemy drones. There are also classic light-bike bits where you have to force rival bikes to crash into your 'wall' and a smart puzzle minigame that you need to beat before you're able to break the security barriers in the main adventure mode. Pleasingly, you can play each mode at your leisure (and in multiplayer) from the main menu, along with some bonus Tron games from past platforms (both home and arcade). So as a package for Tron fans this isn't bad. Hardly essential, but entertaining enough.

GERAINT EVANS



△ We haven't seen anything this gaudy since Marcus' 'special' summer wardrobe.





△ Not the sort of thing we'd rush out and buy…

WADE HIXTON'S COUNTER PUNCH

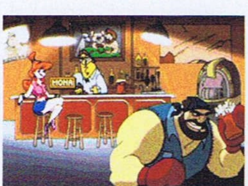
It looks quite tidy – there's no escaping the fact. Well-animated, nicely designed, chunky characters fill the screen in this unashamed *Super Punch Out*-style boxing game that gives you an over-the-shoulder view of the cartoon pugilist you're facing off against. In fact, it's such a nice looking game that for the first 20 minutes or so *Counter Punch* almost convinces you it's pretty good.

'Pretty good' doesn't *exactly* sum it up, though. While it's hardly awful, it's not challenging and anyone with just a couple of brain cells to rub together will figure out how easy it is to make decent headway into the game. Wait for the opponent to attack, dodge in the appropriate direction and then deliver your flurry of three body hits followed by a hook or an uppercut.

Simply follow this formula time and time again (making sure you upgrade your boxer when you can) and you'll soon find yourself either desperately staving off boredom or back at your game shop looking for a suitable exchange.

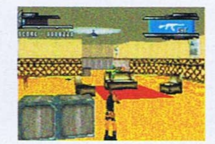
Ultimately, its problem is that it never manages to be anything other than a rather nice-looking diversion.

GERAINT EVANS


△ Chat to people for tips or to influence upcoming fights.







KILL SWITCH

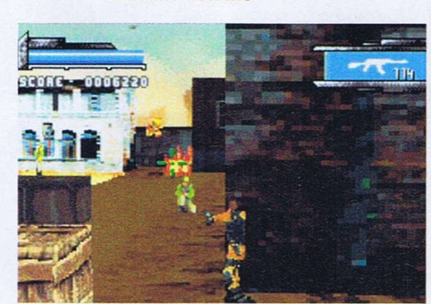


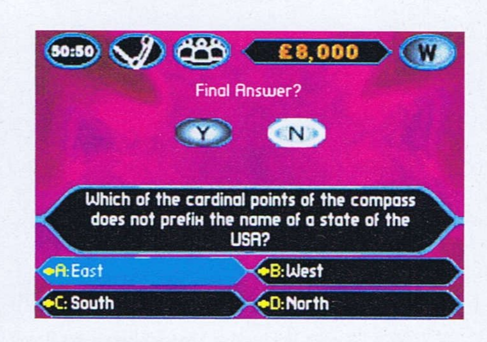
fter just one look at the 3D graphics on this third-person shooter we were getting more than a faint whiff of last month's abysmal *Payback*. Like almost every other 3D GBA game we've seen, that one turned out to be crud. Jerky, near-unplayable and generally completely pointless.

That's not the case with *Kill. Switch* – which, as it happens, isn't a bad effort at all. To start with, the frame rate, though not exactly perfect, is respectable enough. *Switch* also justifies its ambitious visuals too, with action that revolves around working through levels, taking cover behind boxes, walls and alcoves en route in order to reach the objective at the end. Running around spraying enemies with bullets is a no-no (unless you want a quick death and restart), making the action focused more on careful use of the environment. In this respect it's vaguely reminiscent of the N64's *Winback* (albeit a more basic and repetitive version), which is by no means a bad thing…

GERAINT EVANS

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△ While you're hiding behind a wall you can still set your aim ready for when you decide to attack.





△ Even Tarrant is more entertaining than this…

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE 2ND EDITION

Turn on your GBA and you're launched into the questions with barely so much as a fanfare. From here you just answer questions to reach the virtual Millionaire mark. That's it. Seriously. THAT. IS. IT. This is the second edition of the game and the overall presentation is even *worse* than that of its predecessor. What you're left with is a very, very basic cartridge that just chucks progressively trickier questions at you – and even that didn't prevent us (as a team) of reaching the million quid 'prize' in under an hour of turning the thing on – at which point you're just whisked back to the start again.

We're absolutely lost for words on this one. You'd be better off playing this game for free by watching it on the television. You'll have more fun with a £2.99 book of trivia. You'll be better off staying as far away from this lazy slab of plastic as you can. So it's getting 5%. For 'existing'. And *that* is generous.

GERAINT EVANS



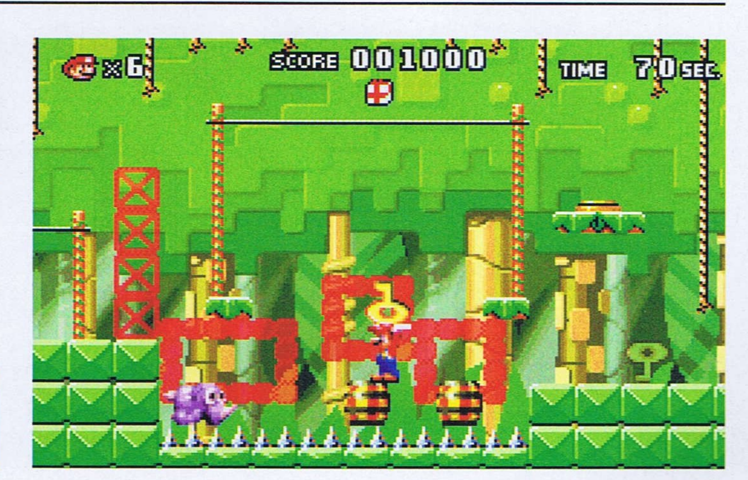
MARIO VS DONKEY KONG



quick recap now *MvDK's* out in the UK. It's a pleasure to play, and if it weren't for the repetitive bosses and play mechanics, it could have been a classic. Each level plays out like a mini platformer-cum-puzzler, and you use Mario's increasing roster of acrobatic abilities to collect Mario toys stolen by the big ape. It offers plenty of scope for replaying, high-score topping, and time trialling thanks to the quick-fire nature of each stage. One of the best games available for GBA.

GERAINT EVANS





"Guide a piece of food through a man's bowels"

△ The motion sensor also works if you hold the GBA still and spin around on the spot. But you get dizzy.

△ Gacha Koron mode is where all your bonus toys accumulate, separated into seven categories.

NGC ON THE DVD VIDEO

MAWARU MADE IN WARIO

Revolutionary! Why Wario Ware is the Best Thing Ever…



We've never heard of a Nintendo fan who doesn't love the *Made In Wario* series (*Wario Ware* in the UK), and like everyone else we'd have been more than happy to see a sequel that consisted of another 200 minigames and some new music. But *Mawaru* is no ordinary sequel.

It's like Nintendo holding a party in your honour and every five minutes pressing into your greedy hands yet another brilliant little stocking-filler present. The best gift of all, the one that keeps on giving, is the game's control system – this is classic Nintendo played without a D-pad. In fact, most of the minigames don't use any buttons at all.

The bulky cartridge houses a motion-sensing chip and battery-free rumble motor. Appropriately enough, it even looks a bit like an N64 rumble pak. Hold the GBA in front of you, tip it to one side, and the whole thing comes to life, emitting meaty thumps that make it feel like you're turning the clicky dial on a hi-fi. It's all tied in with what's happening on the screen. The rotating menus give out a big click each time you spin the GBA to the next option; during games there's generally a more subtle effect to let you feel exactly how much you're affecting the flawlessly sensitive motion chip.

With these tools you play hundreds of quick-fire games, divided into broad categories. One character's games involve holding the GBA upside down or spinning it 360°; another character has games based on puzzles, such as unhooking a key from a keyring; yet another has tiny snippets from old Nintendo titles, played by tilting the GBA and tapping the A-button.



JAPANESE IMPORT

There aren't too many places where a lack of Japanese will hamper your progress. A couple of games involve picking letters to spell simple words like cat, dog and fish in Japanese, and another sees you matching up letters to answer a question. It's trial and error if you can't read hiragana but you'll get by just fine in every other game.

It's simply perfect – bite-size morsels of Nintendo fun, played against a panic-inducingly tight time limit, and broken up every 15-or-so games by a more substantial boss battle. Watching the footage on this month's DVD, it does seem like just another helping of *Wario Ware*, albeit one that makes heavy use of the GBA's ability to rotate graphics. But to play it is to appreciate the brilliance of an analogue control system so satisfying, you'll find yourself needlessly tilting the GBA on menu screens just to feel it clicking away in your hands like it was somehow connected to the air.

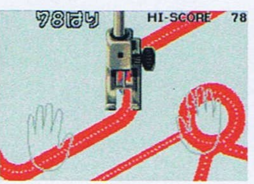
Without the rumble feedback it wouldn't be anywhere near as good, but the design quality extends way beyond mere hardware. The way *Mawaru* is put together, from the humour and style of the widely varied minigame graphics to the structure

PERFECTLY FORMED

Because small is beautiful.



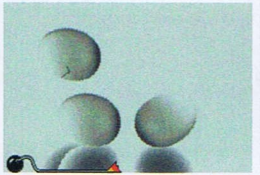
APPLE ATTACK Fire a stream of tiny Warios at an army of apples as they march and parachute towards your cannon. Hugely satisfying.



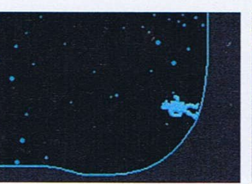
SEWING MACHINE CLUB Good name for a mag. Stitching the twisty cloth requires precision spinning and the ability to function upside down.



ANIMAL TRAGIC Men and horses fall from the sky. You wave a hand to bat them at their own species. Then everyone gets struck by lightning.



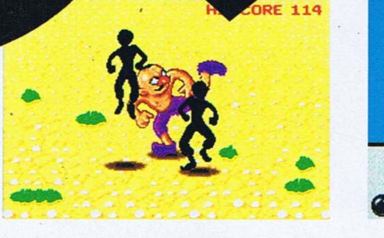
EGG MEDITATION Balance a stack of eggs by holding the GBA perfectly still. Great for endurance tests (you could cheat and lay it on a table).

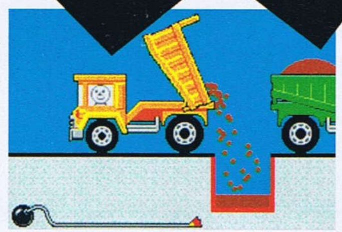


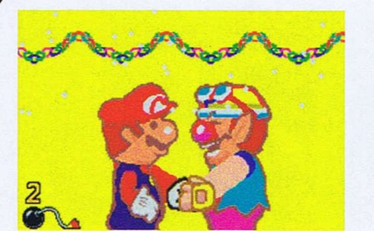
GRAVITY WORRY Rotate the GBA to keep the little man upright as he walks over the hills. Perfect for drawing curious looks on the train.

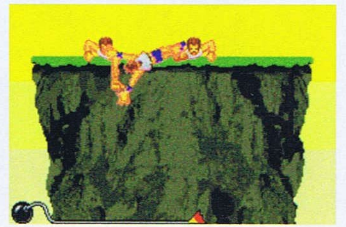


SCRATCH DJ Instead of a sound test mode, you unlock a collection of records so you can scratch along with the music. Wiki-wiki-wicked!



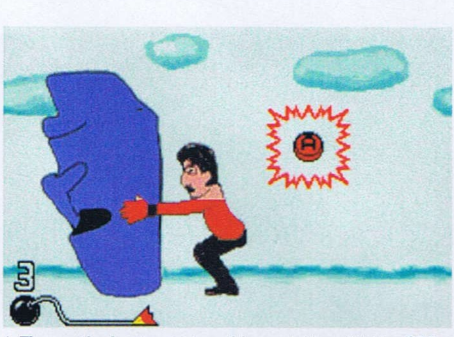








△ There are several piano-based bonus toys.



△ Thump the button to turn him red, then tilt the GBA.



△ Deflect ice blocks and other incoming projectiles.

of its reward system, is exemplarary. Picking on the most obvious target, EA's titles, with their endless screens of padlocked options, are an object lesson in how to frustrate the player by denying access to 95% of the game he's just paid £40 for. Playing for half an hour just to unlock a new hairstyle for the create-a-player mode, or some new car that's indistinguishable from 20 others – who cares?

Mawaru's approach is to reward you with something small but perfectly formed, every single time you make it past a boss stage. It could be anything from a kaleidoscope you'll play with once then never touch again, to a little shoot-'em-up game that will keep you busy for a couple of hours. Or a toy animal you can shake around; a musical instrument; a graphical demo; a visual joke where you reach the punchline by tilting the GBA...

ANY OLD GAME BOY?

The ideal way to play this would be on a circular GBA, for easier rotation. Luckily it works great with both an original GBA or an SP. You'll never have to move violently enough to make the SP's lid wobble, although it is a little easier on an original model. The SP's bright screen makes it the model of choice for us.

It's an explosion of imagination, with a lot more hits than misses. The toy incentives are absolute genius,

"WHAT OTHER GAME WOULD GIVE YOU A GRATER AND ASSORTMENT OF VEGETABLES TO PLAY WITH?"

and have kept us playing the main game miles more than we did with the original *Made In Wario*. Come on, what other game would give you a cheese grater to play with? And an assortment of vegetables, cakes and motor vehicles to feed through it? Where else will you find a boss stage based on nose-picking? Or a scene where you guide a piece of food through a man's bowels?

It probably won't be released over here for ages, making it the most essential Japanese import we've played in a long time. Your GBA isn't complete without this in your collection. Plus the smugness factor you'll get from owning this before most people have heard of it is priceless.

MARTIN KITTS



INFO BURST

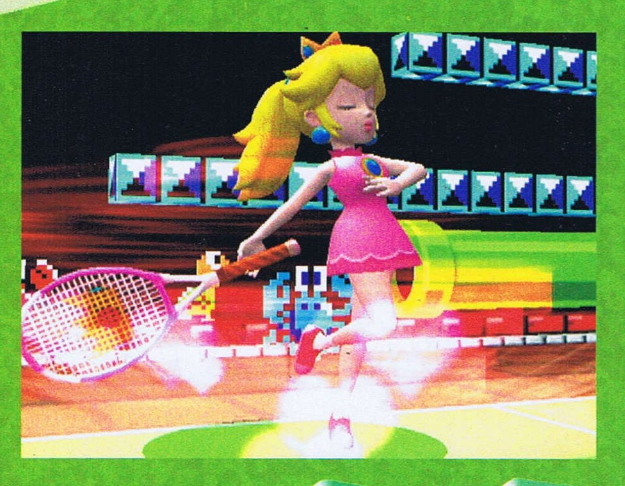
FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW (JAP)
COST	¥4,800 (£23)

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **92**

"Aced more serious tennis sims clean off the court"

NGC ON THE DVD VIDEO

NGC STAR GAME







A second serving of outrageous tennis fun. This one is 'special'…



ario Tennis was not only the best sports title on N64, but also the best tennis game ever made. The unique control system, by which the computer took care of technical things such as timing your swing, leaving the players free to concentrate on more interesting things like outwitting opponents, aced more serious tennis sims clean off the court.

When the sequel was first announced for Gamecube, the prospect of more of the same, but with nicer graphics, had us crossing our fingers and saving our cash in the hope that the fast-working Takahashi brothers and their Camelot team might match the original game's tiny eight-month development period.

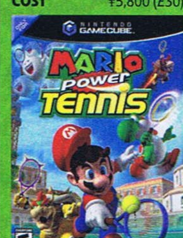
But the project was put on hold until early this year, revealing its high-res, powered-up glory for the first time at E3 last May. And now here's the finished article, looking absolutely stunning and once again having taken less time to gestate than the average baby.

What have they been putting in the coffee machines over at Camelot..?

"LOOKS HAVE RARELY BEEN LESS IMPORTANT IN A GAME"



PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	CAMELOT
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW (JAPAN/US)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	¥5,800 (£30)



SUPER, SMASHING, GREAT

Take a look at those cheaty, cheaty special moves in full effect.











DONKEY KONG
Outwit the Kongster and he'll whip out a banana boomerang that can hook the ball back from any part of the court. Aaarrrgh! Or he'll hop into a massive wooden barrel and blast the ball back at you at mega speeds, which is actually quite easy to return for a winner. Heh.

WARIO
He's the main man as far as we're concerned. Other characters have been powered up to match him, but he still has the old skills. Plus an ace extendable racquet-grabber and a thing that hits him on the head to make him unleash a raging flamer of a shot.

SHY GUY
The best way to return most special shots is to stand near the net so you can catch the other player out of position when you volley. This git makes his recovery shot loop high in the air, so if you're loitering at the net and not charged up, you get lobbed every time.

WALUIGI
Since Waluigi was invented by Camelot for the N64 Mario Tennis*, it's only right that he should have a smart special move. Here he stuffs in some earplugs, floods the court with water, and swims to wherever the otherwise unreachable tennis ball is. Grrrr.*

PEACH
The main arena has been christened the Peach Dome in the Princess' honour, which she acknowledges by wearing her shortest, tightest dress ever. When she isn't flaunting her own Peach Domes, she has special girly moves that involve flowers and feathers.



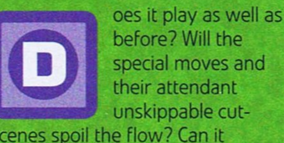






HIDDEN

Like Mario Golf Toadstool Tour*, most of the characters are available from the start – as far as we've been able to tell, there are only four hidden ones. Extra courts and modes are also unlocked very quickly, but with 18 characters and six tournaments to work through with each one, there's still quite a lasting challenge here.*



Does it play as well as before? Will the special moves and their attendant unskippable cut-scenes spoil the flow? Can it possibly retain the magic that made the N64 version so good four years ago?

After slogging through the entire single-player mode, unlocking some very odd new courts and destroying one perfectly serviceable Wavebird controller in the process, we'd say there's far more to celebrate than to complain about. It can be monstrously frustrating at times, even downright unfair, but having experienced *Mario Tennis* on Gamecube, it's hard to imagine ever wanting to dig out the N64 version again. In fact, this pretty much is the N64 version with a whole load of extras and some brilliant graphics. From the bounce of the ball to the feel of the controls, it's obviously built on the foundations laid down by the older game.

"FAR MORE TO CELEBRATE THAN TO COMPLAIN ABOUT"

Which means *Mario Tennis* masters will power through the early tournaments and rookies will find it takes all of 60 seconds to learn the ropes, thanks to a control system that's a breeze to use.

You only use two buttons for the normal moves, double-tapping or rolling your thumb across the buttons to perform hard shots, lobs and drop shots. After pressing a button to initiate a shot, your character will be frozen to the spot. If the ball comes within range they'll hit it automatically and the longer they were frozen, the more power and angle the shot will have. If you

THE MADNESS OF MARIO TENNIS

We'd have been pretty happy if it was just ordinary tennis, but these bizarre bonus games show that somebody on the development team fancied having a go at something a little more creative. There are multiple levels for each challenge here, and a reward for anyone good enough to finish the lot. You can also return to these tricked-out courts later and play a standard game of tennis, if you like.



BLOOPER
Watch in awe as the sludge-loving squid from Super Mario Sunshine returns every shot using an infinite supply of racquets. The aim is to keep the rally going as long as possible – he returns the ball to the same colour square it landed on, but you can't hit the same square twice in a row.



BOW-WOW
Chip balls at your Chain Chomp to batter it back into its kennel, while directing bombs towards the other players. After repeating this strange and pointless activity for a while, a fence drops down at the bottom of the screen and you must stand on a pad and hammer the A button. Very odd.



GHOSTIES
Score points by hitting the ghost portraits. The currently active ghost scores more points than the others, so there's a bit of aiming skill involved. Let one of the spooks escape its frame and it will chase your dude around the court, frightening him until he has a fatal heart attack.



KLAPTRAPS
See how the little crocodiles climb the vines – how cute. (We'd quite like to see them reach the top and munch on Lakitu.) Unfortunately, if they reach one of the balloons at the top of the wall, you die. So you'd better hit the correct pivoting wall panels to guide them harmlessly over the other side, away from the balloons. This one calls for a slower, more thoughtful approach.



MECHA-BOWSER
There are no actual balls involved in this Mario Sunshine boss battle. Tapping the button unleashes a volley of blue plasma for you to belt at him, while our robotic turtle friend breathes fire, shoots missiles and drops bombs in return.
Holding the button charges up a triple homing shot, which should reduce the mechanical blighter to scrap metal pretty fast.



PAINT
Colour the pictures by hitting blobs of paint at them. The paint comes out of the warp pipes at the side of the screen, which change colour to show exactly which hue will be shot towards you next.
The reflection on the floor flashes to show which parts of the picture haven't been coloured correctly, but that doesn't make this tough challenge much easier.



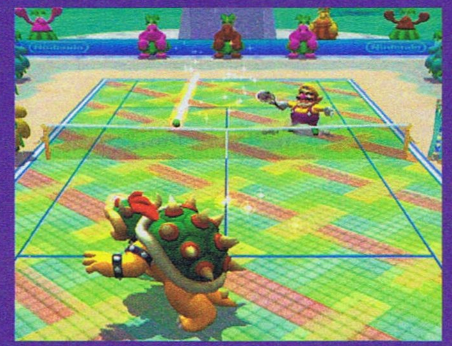
SLUDGE
Not so long ago, the Delfino people were terrified of this brown gloop and the plucky plumber had to clean it up for them. Now they use it as part of a tennis game, in which you hit balls of water to clean tic-tac-toe patterns on the court. So there was obviously nothing harmful about the stuff in the first place. Mario is reported to be considering legal action at this point.

COURT ON CAMERA

There's much more than simply grass, concrete and red mud.



This is one of the more 'tricksy' courts, featuring a sliding-panel floor which moves around when the ball hits it. You can't fall through the holes when you stand on them, but if the ball lands on an empty space it's counted as an instant foul. This definitely cuts down the length of the average rally, particularly in a doubles match…



Here's the funky Delfino Plaza court, finally cleared of all traces of sticky brown sludge. Great news! Once you've unlocked this or any of the other gimmick courts, you can play ordinary exhibition matches on it. This one plays like a regular hard court; others replicate the normal clay or grass, or freaky surfaces with unusual bouncy qualities.



The pipe-edged Mario Bros stage is unlocked very early in the game, and features 2D Koopas that wander back and forth on the service line. Look closely and you'll also see there are POW blocks on the net. Hit these to flip the Koopas onto their backs.
Other than that, it's a standard hard court with nice, retro visuals.



BATTLE TENNIS

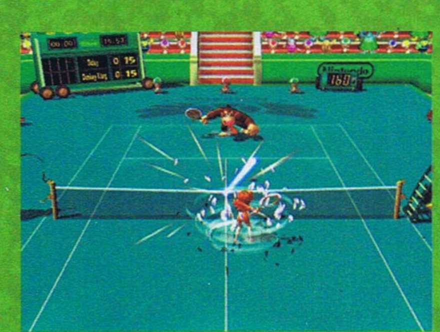
This variation, with added Mario Kart weapons, was also in the N64 version. Hit the ball through the boxes on the net to collect a special item, which is unleashed the next time you make a shot. You'll find everything from turbo mushrooms to lightning bolts for shrinking your opponents, but you probably won't be able to take the time to use any of these things strategically. They just sort of happen, making the court a very busy, slightly random place.



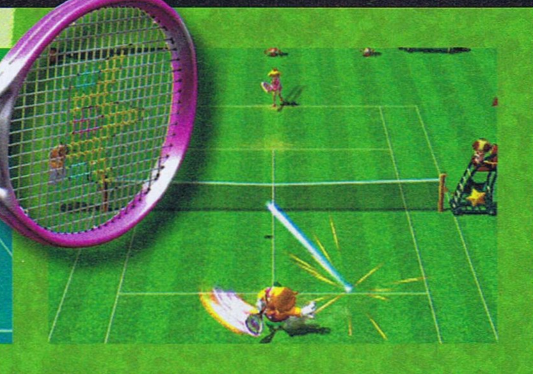
△ Totting up the scores in the Ring Shot mode.



△ Using specials here isn't a great idea.



△ Daisy gets in a feathery spin with her special.



misjudged it and froze in the wrong spot, or your opponent sold you a dummy, you'll have to hit the left trigger to unfreeze and recover.

Play it well, and it's brilliantly tactical. A good player will know what their opponent's options are from any position, and will be able to close down the court and charge a shot much earlier than a novice. But because you don't have to worry much about timing shots, tennis tactics are all you have to concern yourself with. Learning to play like something approximating an expert takes less time here than in most other sports games.

All of the above could apply to the N64 title. The difference on Gamecube is the addition of special moves, which aren't the love-it-or-hate-it feature we expected – you'll love *and* hate them, often within the duration of a point.

Every few shots, your racquet glows to show you can use one of two character-specific specials – an attacking move which, should your opponent manage to get in the way of it, will blast them to the back of the court; and a defensive move which will let you return any ball from anywhere on the screen, even if you're clearly beaten.

Faced with a computer opponent who can change shot types during the charge-up process without having to unfreeze and start over, you'll be grateful for the defensive move. The attacking move comes in handy too, although usually only when returning an incoming special.

Each special's preceded by a cut-scene lasting about three seconds, showing the players whipping out mallets, invoking lightning strikes, or whatever. They look great but do spoil the flow, especially when using a special to return another special or in a doubles match.

The real problem with them is their frequency. If it was only a few

> **"PLAY THE GAME WELL AND IT'S BRILLIANTLY TACTICAL"**



△ Ring Shot again. Changing the subject, it's a shame the anime-style comedy replays from the N64 version have been dropped. Humbug.





times per match, then fine, but after using a special it's possible to gain another within three shots. The computer is particularly adept at this, and just after you should have legitimately won a point through superior play, you'll see the ball looping over your player's head thanks to a cheaty defensive move. If you don't have a special of your own ready, you're screwed.

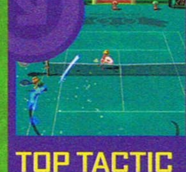
Talk about cheap. It was in one of those moments that our Wavebird met its end (top tip – if you have a tantrum, bang your 'pad against something soft rather than hurling it on a hard floor).

While you can turn off the specials for exhibition matches, you're stuck with them in the tournaments you need to win in order to unlock the game's secrets. In the final tourney, you'll face opponents so skilful as to be damn near unbeatable using 'pure' tennis. When you do get the measure of them, seeing them whip out a magic hand, collect a ball you smashed to the opposite side of the court, and lob it perfectly over your head… 'Frustrating' doesn't quite cover the sense of bitter injustice, particularly when you *know* it's coming because you've just had to watch a cut-scene showing exactly how you're going to be robbed.

But… The special moves are a superb way of ensuring good players can have a competitive match with rubbish ones. Looking at it like that, it's easy to understand why Camelot included them. I've spent more hours with the N64 version than I'd care to admit, and I can't recall losing a two-player match. Not unless I lost deliberately, to prevent my opponent storming off in a huff. Turn off the specials and the GC game becomes one-sided, but with them it's almost a *Mario Kart* free-for-all. If anyone else around here grows some skills, the special moves will never be seen again, but as that's unlikely to happen, they're staying.

So, that's *Mario Tennis GC* (or *Mario Power Tennis*, as the US and UK versions are known). Crammed with bonus stuff, and as much fun to play as it is gorgeous to look at. On import now, or next year if you want the PAL edition, it's essential.

MARTIN KITTS



TOP TACTIC

The computer players are adept at charging special moves and returning the most impossible balls. To beat them, we found it best to get to the net very quickly and volley past them before they get a chance to special you. This works fairly well against most players apart from Waluigi and Shy Guy.



- Easy to play.
- Bonus games.
- Beautiful graphics.
- Very Mario.



- Cheaty specials.
- Boring replays.



Mario Kart Double Dash
Nintendo
NGC/88, 93%
Frantic cartoon kart racing and cheating with the gang. Great stuff.





Exceptionally clean, crisp and well animated graphics.



Charles Martinet has a field day with this one…



Great use of the console and Nintendo's back catalogue.



Loads of variety, and the later tourneys are rock hard.

VERDICT

A delicious blend of pleasure and pain. Everyone should own a copy of this (and practice lots as well).



"Plentiful nerve-fraying tension"



CONTROL GOAL
Unlike the GBA Kururin, the Gamecube version has brilliant analogue control that allows for pinpoint manoeuvring. Lovely.

SPINNY STICK!
It's this that you guide around each level, spinning hypnotically like a clown's bow tie. Or maybe just a stick that's, er, spinning.



LEVEL SELECT
Each level belongs to a themed world and your task is simply to get from start to finish without dying, preferably as quickly as you can.





HAZARDS
It's not only the walls you've got to look out for, but various hazards like wandering monsters, ginormous spiked balls and flamethrowers as well.





INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE	NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	¥3,800 (£19)



KURURIN SQUASH

Or, as we think it should be called, Super Spinny Stick Spectacular! Snappy, eh? (*No* – Ed.)



Like *Super Monkey Ball*, there's something superbly simple about *Kururin Squash*. Just as Sega's masterpiece can be reduced to a high-concept pitch (roll an enclosed monkey around without falling to your doom) so it is with Nintendo's puzzling beauty. It's all about getting a spinning stick from A to B without hitting walls or monsters. Simple. But crucially, it's never easy, and it offers both bags of subtlety and plentiful nerve-fraying tension that will reduce you to tears with distressing regularity. *Kururin Squash* is merciless, and will crush you given half a chance.

Of course, this will all be old news if you've played the original *Kururin* on the GBA, as this is, at heart, exactly the same game, but bigger and more varied (and much more difficult). Your spinning stick can be accelerated with B and the rotation of the 'blades' can be similarly sped-up with R, allowing expert players to prove their mastery by setting some high-speed records. Hitting walls adds three seconds to your time, and three collisions mean it's game over. *Donkey Konga* and *Super Monkey Ball* aside, it's the easiest game to grasp on Gamecube but, perhaps typically, is one of the hardest to master.

Things naturally start off mildly enough, offering a selection of basic mazes to ease you into proceedings, but the difficulty curve soon hits the vertical with more fiendish designs, the addition of monsters and flame-jets – and even different 'sticks', which get progressively more inventive. Of all of these, our particular favourite's the water-borne rotor that can submerge itself to duck under



LINKY DINK
In each of Kururin Squash's 'worlds' you can visit a shop and buy things, including different sticks. There's also some GBA connectivity to purchase, but this disappointingly takes the form of a Simon Says-style match-the-pattern affair for up to four players. It's no Pac Man Vs, that's for sure.

> **"KURURIN SQUASH IS MERCILESS, AND WILL CRUSH YOU GIVEN HALF A CHANCE"**

KURURIN SQUASH

Sticky, but not brown and sticky



△ Looks pretty, doesn't it? Pretty, but deadly. Those walls'll finish you off sharpish.

△ These barrels are spiky, and therefore dangerous. Do try to avoid them, eh?

△ Tiny cut-scenes announce your entrance into the boss arenas. Ready to fight?

△ This stick has boxing gloves on either end that shoot out and give things a pummelling – here you've got to knock the oranges into the duck. A sentence we never thought we'd type, there.

MONSTER!

Each world culminates in a boss encounter where your Kururin skills will be put to the test. Most annoying by far is the duck-thing that hovers above you, making a fiddly whirlwind-emplacement necessary. Grr.



floating logs and the like. Just watch out for submerged mines…

It's possible to get supremely elegant with *Kururin Squash*, once you get a handle on the rotation of your stick and timing movement perfectly to slingshot around a sweeping, narrow curve, but this takes a lot of practice. The multitude of ways to play – do you collect coins (which allow you to purchase plenty of extras) or go for speed, for example – also mean that there's extra depth for the pro player, and getting good at *Kururin* brings with it a palpable thrill.

But as engrossing as it can be, *Kururin Squash* is often too frustrating to hook us quite like a Ninty game should. Still, it's top puzzle-action fun nonetheless.

JES BICKHAM

WINDY MILLER

One of the sticks (do they have a proper name?) creates whirlwinds that blow enemies away and momentarily extinguish flames. It's a neat idea but it's one of the most annoying sticks, as you have to aim your whirlwind, which forces you to move in that direction too.



△ This on-rails level sees you trying to flame lots of enemies without being hit yourself. It's all good, clean fun and luckily you can direct your flamethrower.



- Simple.
- Deep.
- Addictive and engrossing.



- Often frustrating.
- Can be incredibly hard.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Ikaruga
Atari
NGC/80, 85%
Rock-hard shooter that's almost a puzzle game in the way it plays.



6 VISUALS

Cute 'n clean but hardly pushing the graphics envelope.



6 SOUNDS

The usual jaunty Ninty aural experience. Cute.



5 MASTERY

It's basically a 2D puzzle game with quasi-3D bits.

7 LIFESPAN

If it doesn't get too much, you'll want to polish your times.

VERDICT

Bigger, harder and more varied than its GBA counterpart, this is an excellent if frustrating puzzle game.





△ Get the computer to play with you if you have no mates or spare bongos.



△ Puzzle-race mode. Right-clap-right-clap would clear Dixie's side. It's easy.



△ Memorise the drum pattern, then play it blind for a couple of bars – one of the excellent new bonus games.



△ See the swanky 3D backdrop? Ahh. Well, there's no time to admire the scenery.



△ Bashing the bongos makes characters pop up. Why not?

DONKEY KONGA 2 HIT SONG PARADE

Monkey bongos meet the Japanese pop chart.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RELEASE DATE	NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	¥4,500 (£22)





Drummed your way through the tunes in the UK version of *Donkey Konga*? Here are more than 30 new ones, plus a couple of extra minigames. The catch? You'd better like J-pop, because the theme for *Donkey Konga 2* is bouncy, high-tempo and very Japanese.

Once again, the aim is to bongo in time with the music. Not much has been changed other than the addition of 3D backgrounds, which you won't be able to appreciate unless you watch someone else play. Also, a quirk of the original, whereby you could score an 'OK' by pressing both drums together, has been fixed – try it now and you get a yellow OK of incompetence rather than a proper green one.

The new minigames are great. In the first, the game plays a brief sequence of beats which players take turns to repeat, without any guiding markers. Hit a wrong one and you lose a life. The second game is a puzzle-style affair, with drum sequences dropping into a well. Hitting the right notes makes the next sequence appear, so it's a non-musical race to clear the screen as fast as possible.

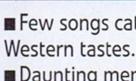
As for the music, we enjoyed the first Japanese version more than this. Some of the TV and anime themes here are particularly forgettable, although there's a handful of gems such as the Cuban favourite Guantanamera, best known over here as the basis of a thousand football chants. There's also an interesting Latin mix of the Zelda theme, and a brilliant Japanese version of Yankee Doodle. The drum tracks are noticeably more challenging than before, with some tricky new techniques cropping up in even the easier tunes.

So, new tunes for old bongos. The music won't be to everybody's taste, but it's fairly cheap, and almost worth it just for Yankee Doodle and the minigames. Importers beware, though, as you'll never be able to save the game if you play on a PAL console with a Freeloader disc. Bah.

MARTIN KITTS



- 32 new songs.
- Improved mini-games.
- Better graphics.



- Few songs cater for Western tastes.
- Daunting menus.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Donkey Konga
Nintendo
NGC/99 88%
The English version of the first bongoing game. Collect them all!





5 VISUALS
A fresher look, with 3D background graphics.

7 SOUNDS
Hope you're keen on J-pop and anime theme tunes…

8 MASTERY
Still the most accessible party game around.



8 LIFESPAN
Better minigames, and all-new songs to play through.

VERDICT
More bongo brilliance, with music you'd never have thought to listen to. One to expand your horizons, perhaps.



CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR... MASSIVE GAMES ON EVERY MACHINE!

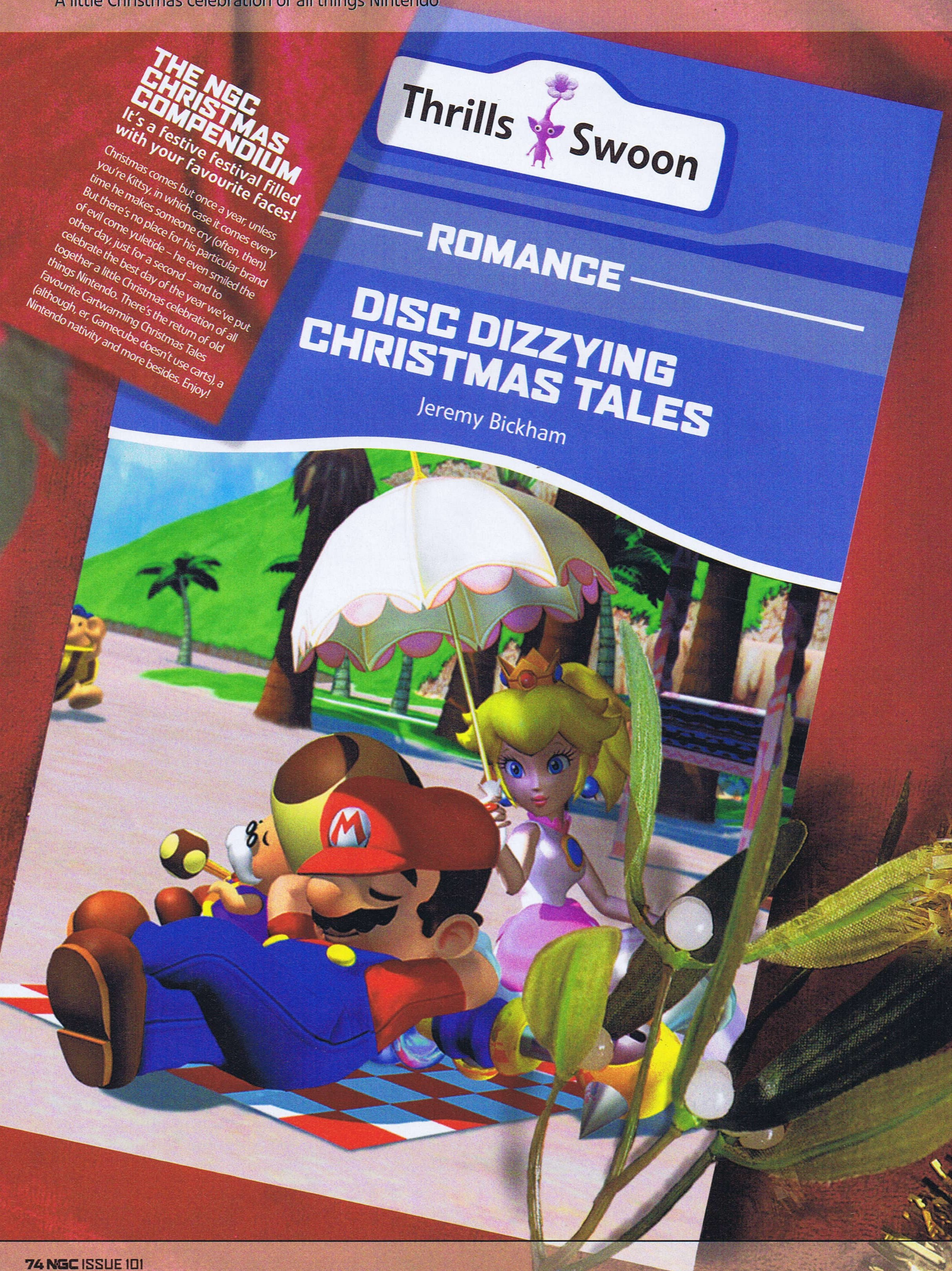


XMAS ISSUE OF GAMESMASTER ON SALE NOW

THE NGC CHRISTMAS COMPENDIUM

It's a festive festival filled with your favourite faces!

Christmas comes but once a year, unless you're Kittsy, in which case it comes every time he makes someone cry (often, then). But there's no place for his particular brand of evil come yuletide – he even smiled the other day, just for a second – and to celebrate the best day of the year we've put together a little Christmas celebration of all things Nintendo. There's the retum of old favourite Cartwarming Christmas Tales (although, er, Gamecube doesn't use carts), a Nintendo nativity and more besides. Enjoy!



THE OFFICE... OF LOVE

all greasy and slick, and not a little salty too. "That's the last time I go to the gym at lunchtime," said Paul, "I spend half the afternoon sweaty and smelly."

"Well, maybe you should have a shower, then, you stinking great fool," countered Geraint, wrinkling his nose with distaste at the pungent, acrid odour that was emanating from Paul's rippling form.

"Sorry dude. I'll try to remember next time."

At this moment Mim entered the office, tossing her ocean-blue hair with gay abandon, swishing her enormous witch-skirt and swinging a broomstick. She was quite the most colourful goth the NGC team had seen. As she sat down, she sniffed the air and raised an

61

THE OFFICE... OF LOVE

eyebrow. "Who is it that smells so… manly?" she asked.

"That'll be Paul," said Martin, idly pulling the wings off a fly. "He doesn't have the common decency to use deodorant. And the last thing I want on Christmas Eve is his BO in my nose."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mim, her lower lip trembling and her breath coming in short gasps, "I find the scent quite agreeable indeed."

"Why Mim!" laughed Paul, "I had no idea that my stink was so exciting!" NGC's Art Editor plainly thought Mim was joking, but as he looked over at her opalescent features and met her eyes, something clicked. There was a pause, a beat, and Mim suddenly

62

HAPPINESS IS A WARM ARM-MOUNTED CANNON

it was pulsating, increasing in size, and giving off an immense amount of heat. "The Metroid!" gasped Samus, "it's growing!" The energy being was Samus' mortal enemy, but this particular specimen, which she thought she'd mortally wounded, was recovering at an incredible rate, healing and becoming more powerful. If she didn't do something about it now it would no doubt attack her as soon as it had the strength. The galaxy's foremost bounty hunter stepped back, readied her plasma beam, and…

…Sighed. She lowered her arm cannon. She simply couldn't bring herself to kill the beast. Samus was tired; tired of years of hunting for money, tired of the constant moving from system to

73

HAPPINESS IS A WARM ARM-MOUNTED CANNON

system just to pay the bills, and most of all, tired of the unending conflict with the Metroids. Truth be known, she quite liked the little critters; despite their murderous instincts and predilection for sucking your face off, they were cute, squishy and very huggable indeed.

"I've had enough." Samus leant forward and caught the recovering Metroid in an unbreakable hug; it shivered, resisted, and then finally responded to the embrace. As it did so, Samus thought she heard a telepathic message; a voice, as if on the wind, said "is this what you humans call… love?"

Samus trembled and gave a gasp of surprise; the Metroid enveloped her with its diaphanous jelly-like body, extending questing tendrils of biomass inside

74

THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND

was so thin so he could slip into any crack. If he was honest, Mario was thoroughly enjoying his new two-dimensional form; if anything, being able to turn into a paper aeroplane made getting down the stairs rather more exciting. But what would Peach think of his new slimline shape?

"Well, it's about time you lost a bit of weight," said the princess from behind our hero. "Although I've always liked my men chubby – it gives you something to get hold of – a change is always as good a rest. And I'm intrigued as to what you can do…"

Mario went red. He had no idea that being made of paper would have had such an effect. He turned and twirled his moustache in an effort to appear

95

THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND

dashing; but the effect was spoiled as he was almost invisible when facing Peach.

"You know, I always thought Luigi had a certain something," said Peach, "but seeing you all flat like this means he's still destined to be alone." The princess picked up a glass of wine and sashayed closer to Mario. "But let's not talk about him. How about you… wrap me up?"

Mario gasped. At that moment, Peach tripped over her voluminous skirts and, seemingly in slow motion, flung the contents of her wine glass over Mario.

"Mama-mia!" he cried, the liquid having a disastrous effect on his papery form.

"Mario, my sweet!" wailed Peach, "You're going all floppy!"

96

THE LEAVES OF LOVE

grabbed it with both hands and pulled with all his might. But it was no use – he was going to need some help.

"Louie!" shouted Captain Olimar, "I need a hand here! Get the Pikmin!" It was Christmas Eve and Olimar and his sidekick Louie were light years from home, salvaging earthling crap to save Hocotate Company from bankruptcy. It was no time to be away from your loved ones, but, well, what could they do?

Louie approached, bowtie spinning, tripping over his own shoelaces and generally doing nothing to dispel his reputation as a grade-A schmuck. A dozen red Pikmin followed behind him, chattering nonsensically to themselves. "Sorry boss, I sold our cow for some magic beans," he said.

113

THE LEAVES OF LOVE

Olimar sighed. He loved Louie like a brother, but he could be a ginormous dumbass sometimes. "Never mind Louie, just give us a hand. There's some treasure buried here that I'm sure will be worth something."

Louie whistled and directed the Pikmin to the object Olimar was tugging at. The sight of the little beings, so eager to help, eased Olimar's depression. Their selflessness aroused something like love in his heart, and his chest burned with affection for the tinkers. Perhaps this Christmas wouldn't be so lonely after all.

The Pikmin heaved, and pulled whatever was buried out of the cold earth. It was an enormous root vegetable, shaped exactly like a warty

114

COLD CORPSE COMFORT

warm and wet, but clean. The wound would, with any luck, not get infected, thought Leon as he wrapped a rag around it to prevent further blood loss.

It had begun to snow and the forest was carpeted with a fairytale whiteness, but Leon knew that this place wasn't as harmless as it seemed; it harboured murderous terrors and the undead never slept, even at Christmas.

A shuffling sound came from behind him; Leon span 'round, pistol at the ready, and sure enough, a zombie shuffled out of the gloom towards him, arms outstretched. "Braaaaaaaaiiins," it mumbled, and shambled slowly towards him.

"It's always 'brains'," murmured Leon, "never 'cocoa' or 'I want a hug'."

131

COLD CORPSE COMFORT

He aimed the pistol, cocked it, and pressed the trigger. An empty click was his reward.

"Arse." The zombie stumbled onwards, and Leon desperately tried to reload – but it was too late. The rotting horror clasped him in a filthy bear hug. "Brrrraaaiinns," it rasped in his ear, its breath hot and redolent of day-old raw meat. Leon readied himself for the end, just as the zombie planted a sloppy kiss on his cheek, before disengaging and heading back towards the darkness of the wood.

Leon was amazed. He had been saved by some lingering humanity still present in the zombie's liquefying brain. Or was it the spirit of Christmas? He put his hand to his cheek and felt the slimy

132



A VERY NINTENDO NATIVITY

We often ask ourselves 'what if'. What if Paul actually said something that actually *did* make sense? What if Mim didn't shrivel up in the cold light of day? What if monkeys really did live in balls? And, most pertinently, what if your favourite Nintendo characters had to act out the Nativity, just like little kids do at primary school? It's the question on everybody's lips, and we think it'd be a little bit like this…

MARY

While Link's off playing with fairies, Zelda's representing Ninty's other big game series. But it's a bit rum of Mario to leave Peach at home and raise his eyebrow suggestively at another man's gal. The cad.

THE BABY JESUS

Ah, Baby Mario. Who else? Mind you, when Zelda gets back to Hyrule, Rinkydink is going to be mighty puzzled as to why what he might assume to be his child has got a huge hooter and an enormous 'tache that'll undoubtedly sprout as soon as he hits puberty. But let's not worry about that right now. It's Christmas!

THE THREE WISE MEN

AKA Toadsworth, Professor Frankly and, of course, E. Gadd, inventor of wacky things such as ghost-hoovers and water-spraying backpacks, which have little use outside haunted mansions and turd-encrusted fictional seaside towns called 'Delfino'. But! Aside from the Deku Tree, who is a tree and therefore not particularly, mobile, thus making the trip from Hyrule to Bethlehem quite tricky, these are the three wisest 'men' we can think of.

THE DONKEY

One day Yoshi is going to explode in a flurry of dinosaur-based revenge at being used as a beast of burden for an ungrateful Italian plumber. Until that moment, though, he's best placed to be the donkey, although we've yet to see a donkey that has a six-foot tongue and can immediately turn what it's eaten into an egg. A useful talent in videogames, to be sure, but in a stable? That's just *weird.*



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Hopefully Mario won't try to collect it. In his own way he's as avaricious as Wario. Tsk.

THE INNKEEPER

It takes an organised man to run an inn. To keep the guests happy and ensure that a healthy profit is made. And who is the one man who will not take any crapola to stop any of this from happening? It can only be Reggie, who should be happy as there'll be much 'taking names' of guests. Presumably only the spirit of yuletide goodwill is preventing him from a festive overload of ass-kickery, though.

JOSEPH

It's the main man himself, Nintendo's mascot and wearer of the filthiest dungarees this side of Dexy's Midnight Runners. He's no carpenter but let's face it, ancient Bethlehem could probably do with a decent sewage system and Mario, although we've never *actually* seen any evidence of him doing any plumbing, should be able to oblige. He's never happier than when he's up to his armpits in man-filth.

THE SHEPHERDS

Herding sheep isn't something we've seen much of in Nintendo games, but Captain Olimar and his cretinous co-worker Louie are far more advanced than your common-or-garden shepherds. After all, we didn't see anyone on 'One Man And His Dog' ushering 100 freaky plant-people around a grotesquely enlarged garden.

THE NGC HYMN BOOK

A Ninty-alternative to traditional hymns. Makes carolling much more fun, we can tell you.

GOOD KING MARIO

John M. Neale (1818-1866) Words: John M. Neale (1818-1866); first appeared in Carols for Christmas-Tide, 1853, by Neale and Thomas Helmore. With some alterations by **NGC** *Magazine.*

Music: ***"Tempus Adest Floridum"****, a 13th Century spring carol; first published in the Swedish Piae Cantiones, 1582.*

Best sung in a cod-Italian accent, Charles Martinet-style.

Good King Mario looked out on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the Shines that night, though the frost was cruel,
When a poor Toad came in sight, gathering mushrooms.

"Hither, Peach, and stand by me, if you know it, telling,
Yonder Toad, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence, beyond Jolly Roger Bay,
Right against the forest fence, where Delfino is sunny by day."

"Bring me food and bring me coins, bring me fire balls hither,
You and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither."
Peach and Mazza, forth they went, forth they went together,
Through the cold wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger,
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, my good Peach, tread now in them boldly,
You shall find the winter's rage freeze your cakes less coldly."

In his master's steps she trod, where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod which the plumber had printed.
Therefore, Ninty fans, be sure, level or coins possessing,
You who now will bless the poor shall yourselves find blessing.

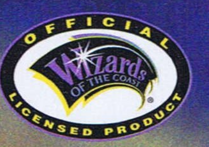
SING FOR US!

Think you can bend a traditional hymn into a new Nintendo shape? Then send us your altered songs and we'll give the most inventive one an **NGC** Christmas gift – nothing less than Geraint's Christmas Elf Hat, signed by the entire **NG** team! What could be better than that? If you send us in video of you singing your hymn that'll impress us eve more. Send your efforts to:

The Hymn-man and Her, NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA2 2BW

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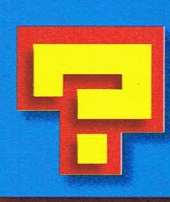












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EXPERT TIPS, TOUGH CHALLENGES, TRIVIA AND MORE

NGC EXTENDED PLAY

DON'T MISS...



Mario's on a mission – and he'd better collect those Star Pieces on the way. P82

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Getting extra from the games you already own.

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Every single Star Piece in the game can be yours – we've done the hard work for you.

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The minigames you make up – for a prize!

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Pedantry and grumbling abounds.

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Because we don't stop giving in the New Year.

100 **MADAME GREENER**
You can count on numerology, she says.

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The all-swinging *Spider-Man 2*.

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Revamped to show only the 100 best games.

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Want a free bag? Of course you do!

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Who's sent a letter to Father Christmas?

CHECK IT!..



△ What untimely demise will Yellow meet?



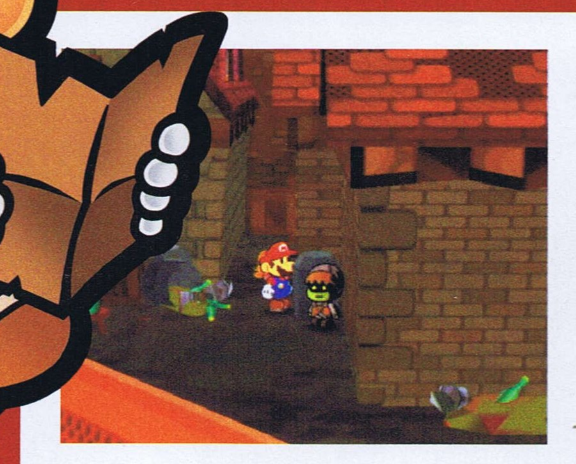
△ The new look Directory – every game you need.



Find all the Star Pieces in ...

PAPER MARIO





A STAR IS TORN

There are bits littered all over the place. Get your flat hands on every last Star Piece with our guide.

Throughout Rogueport and all points beyond, there are one hundred Star Pieces hidden in the world of *Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door*. You can trade them for badges, which help you improve Mario's abilities. But where are these pieces? You can pay the fortuneteller for surprisingly direct hints (she's rather more accurate than Madame Greener, we're happy to report), but conveniently enough, we're about to tell you.

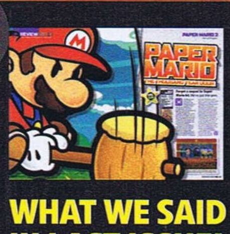
We've listed all the Star Pieces in the order you should find them. Fortunately, since no location in *Paper Mario 2* will explode or fall apart after you leave, you can return at any time to find the pieces you've missed. The billboard at the entrance to the Pit of 100 Trials keeps track of how many you've got, so you'll know if you need to retrace your steps for some old 'uns.

Note that you can only get many of these Star Pieces by flipping floor tiles with your Spin Jump, and you only get *that* in the Great Tree during Chapter 2. If at first the tile doesn't flip, keep trying it from different angles until it does. You'll get the right angle – and the lump of twinkly space-rock – eventually.



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Peach has gone missing yet again. Mario's off to find her – and hoover up the Star Pieces that'll help him gain a mysterious treasure – along the way. Bowser's also in hot pursuit, miffed at someone else purloining his precious princess. We're going to show you how to get the Star Pieces.

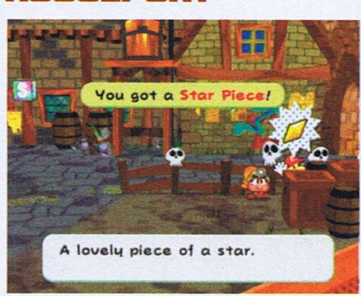


WHAT WE SAID IN LAST ISSUE!

Aesthetically, this is one of Nintendo's greatest triumphs yet. There's a fresh idea and a new surprise around every corner, all wrapped up in a narrative that flows constantly and amusingly, and is populated by likeable and well-written characters.

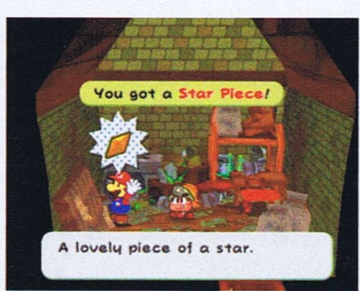


ROGUEPORT



1 Your very first chunk! Check behind the crates and barrels on the right-hand side of Rogueport town square for this one. Aaah, look at it sparkle!

Now you've only got another 99 Star Pieces to collect…



2 Have a look in the room filled with rubbish behind the inn on the left. (The owner of this down-at-heel tavern really needs to clean this place out…)



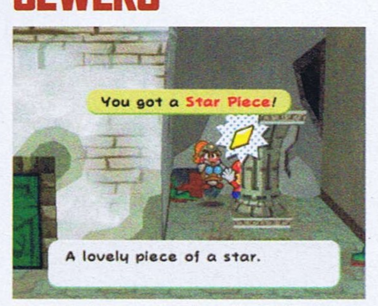
3 Carelessly abandoned on Zess T's roof. To reach this segment, use the door on the second floor of the inn and make your way across.



4 This one's stashed away behind Professor Frankly's house, and it's very well hidden.

Enter the back alley via the near-invisible hole in the wall to the left of Marlon's. Go to the back end of the alley, hop onto the crate, and head right 'til you get the Piece.

ROGUEPORT SEWERS



5 Behind the pedestal to the right of the fortuneteller's house.

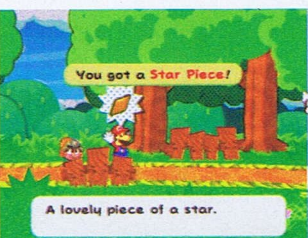
PETAL MEADOWS



6 When you first arrive in Petal Meadows – see how close to the warp pipe we are in the picture? – hammer the tree to the left of the save block.



7 When you warp into the background to hit the blue switch, keep going right.



8 Leave Petalburg via the east gate and check the first bush you find.

HOOKTAIL CASTLE

9 Right after you fight the Red Bones, hit the blue switch to bring down the small blue block. Pause Koops in mid-air, stand Mario on the block and hit the switch with Koops. You'll be then brought to a hidden balcony.

10 As the last one, but use the yellow block and go left.

11 When you jump out of the window, head right.



12 Carefully walk along the back rail behind the aeroplane take-off panel.

ROGUEPORT SEWERS



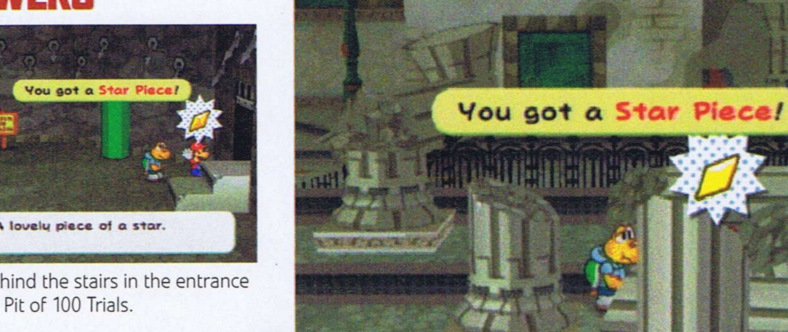
13 Behind the stairs in the entrance to the Pit of 100 Trials.



14 Drop through the sewer grate in west Rogueport. Now look behind the corner of the platform you landed on.

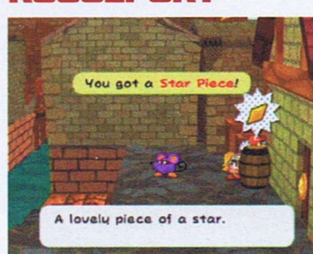


15 Next, hop across the platforms to the right of this point and ferret around behind the pillar next to the locked house.



16 In the same room as Star Piece no. 14, behind the broken pillars to the south of the fortuneteller's house.

ROGUEPORT



17 Slip between two buildings on the west side of town and look behind the barrel outside Ishnail's house for this one.



18-20 In west Rogueport, look behind the short wall near the entrance, the rubbish bin west of the item shop and the warp pipe near the fountain.

BOGGLY WOODS

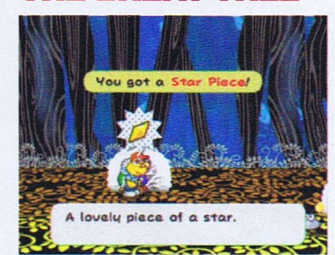


21 Next to the blue switch that raises the aeroplane panel.

22 This Star Piece is to the left of the warp pipe that leads to Flurrie's place, hidden by the fence. You should be able to walk into it.

23 Hammer hard on one of the trees outside Flurrie's house.

THE GREAT TREE



24 After you see your first Jibba, drop down to the room below and shake the big bush on the left.



25 Behind the pipe to the left of the big tree stump.



26 After the cage falls on you, slip out, warp down, and look behind the pipe you come out of.



27 Chase Crump up the Warp Pipe, then check the bushes.



28-29 Spin Jump in the centre of the blue cell, and again near the Warp Pipe one screen up from the 'bubble room'.

HOOKTAIL CASTLE



30 Remember the cell where you found the Castle Key? Return there, go left and Spin Jump.

PETALBURG





31, 32 Spin Jump near Bub-ulber over on the west side of town and in the field of pink flowers near the east gate.

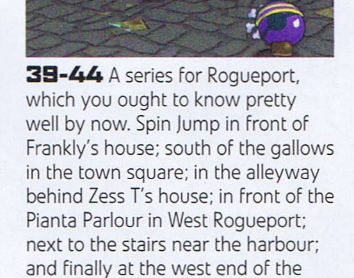
BOGGLY WOODS



33 Spin Jump next to the little sofa in Flurrie's bedroom.

38 Drop through the Warp Pipe near Frankly's house and Spin Jump on the ground underneath the nearby moving platform.

ROGUEPORT



39-44 A series for Rogueport, which you ought to know pretty well by now. Spin Jump in front of Frankly's house; south of the gallows in the town square; in the alleyway behind Zess T's house; in front of the Pianta Parlour in West Rogueport; next to the stairs near the harbour; and finally at the west end of the train platform.

ROGUEPORT SEWERS



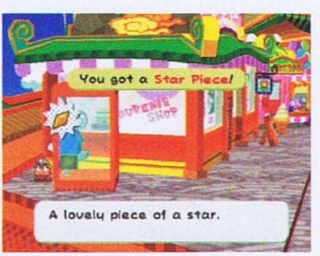
34-37 Spin Jump in front of the chest that contained the aeroplane curse demon; in the room with the Boggly Woods entrance; just south of the Thousand-Year Door; and in Wonky's shop.

45 For your next stellar nugget, have a quick look behind the warp pipe to Glitzville.

GLITZVILLE



46 Spin Jump directly below the landing pad.



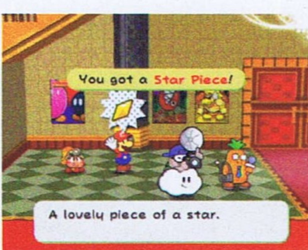
47 Look behind the phone booth.

48 Hit the blue switch to the right of the landing pad, then go up to the juice shop roof and throw Koops underneath the billboard.

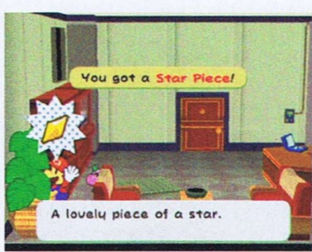


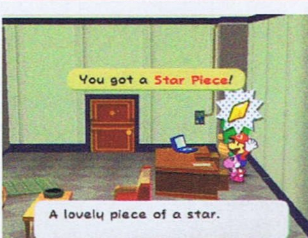
49 Behind the juice shop counter.

50 Behind the right row of ferns near the Pit entrance.



51-53 Spin Jump on the floor near the west stairs in the Pit lobby and in the centre of the storage room. When you find the injured fighters above the storage room, look behind the stack of crates near them.



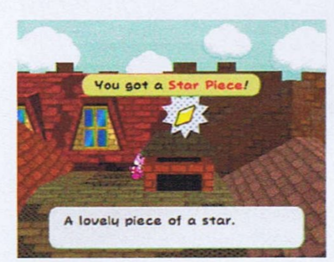


54-55 In Grobbo's office, check behind the big plant. Have a look in his desk drawer too.

ROGUEPORT



56 Go over to east Rogueport and ride Yoshi across the river just below the bridge. Hop up to the roof and Spin Jump…



57 …then ride Yoshi back across the river to the rooftops and look behind the chimney.

ROGUEPORT SEWERS



58 Smash the giant yellow block near the Boggy Woods entrance.

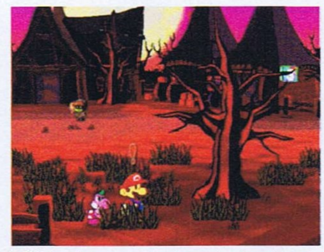


59 Drop through the sewer grate in west Rogueport and ride Yoshi across the gap to your left. Warp into the background, hop across the platforms and nab the Star Piece.

TWILIGHT TOWN



60 Poke around in the alley next to Dour's house.



61 For this one, look in the bushes near the creepy dead tree in west Twilight Town.



62 Behind the barrels near the eastern gate.

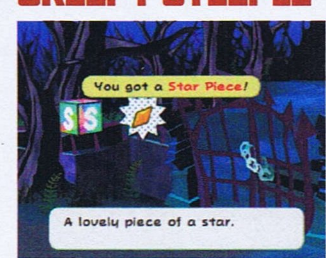


63 Roll underneath the fallen tree. You should see the Star Piece once you're past the tree.



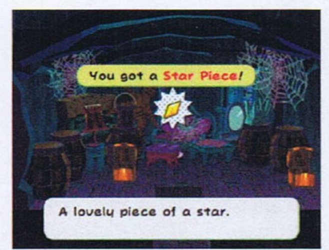
64 Blow away the haystack just past the tree and look behind the warp pipe.

CREEPY STEEPLE

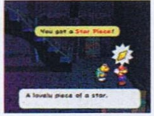


65 Behind the fence, to the left of the main gate.





66 Roll into the small hole in the front hall and go underneath the table for the piece.



67 Pull off a Spin Jump at the foot of the moving staircase.



68 At the right end of the windowed hallway.

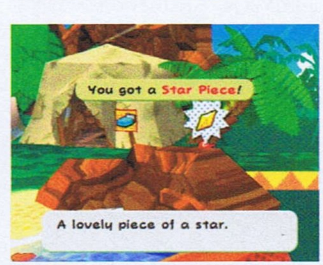


69 Spin Jump on the floor near the green parrot.

KEELHAUL KEY



70-71 Spin Jump along the edge of the stones by the shore. Now look in the water to the south of your campsite – it's in plain sight.



72 Behind the big rock near the campsite's east exit.



73 In the first shakable bush you see.

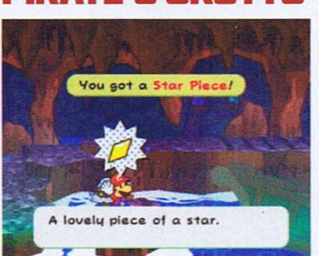


74 Behind a big woody root at the base of the cliff.



75 Behind a rock near the entrance to Pirate's Grotto.

PIRATE'S GROTTO



76 In the open in the first cavern.



77 Spin Jump near the boat panel at the top of the waterfall.



78 In the room where you find the Grotto Key, jump from the platform to the counterweight and ride it up. The Star Piece is in the open barrel.

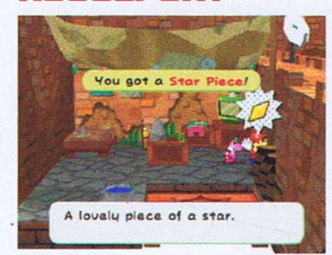
PAPER MARIO

Get all 100 Star Pieces!



79 After you unlock the door with the Grotto Key, Spin Jump in the middle of the floor.

ROGUEPORT



80 Sail off the boat panel near the docks and take a left to find a secret room. Look behind the barrels.

EXCESS EXPRESS



81-82 Spin Jump in Cabin 004 and the engine room.



83 In Cabin 008's nightstand.



84 Give Chef Shimi his pot.

85 Give the waitress her Shell Earrings and she'll give you this.

RIVERSIDE STATION

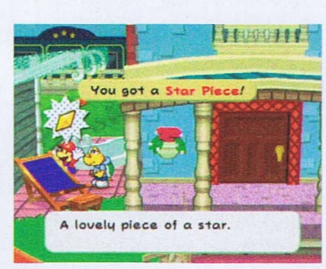


86 Have a look behind the Station Key's pedestal.

POSHLEY HEIGHTS



87 Spin Jump at the base of the train station's stairs.



88 Behind the deckchair next to the mansion left of the train station.

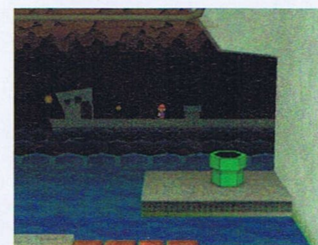


89 Inside the hedge to the right of the pink house. Enter via the 'crack' in the hedge and go up.



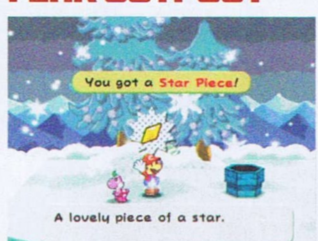
90 In the yard of the house to the left of the hotel left, hidden away behind the hedge.

ROGUEPORT SEWERS

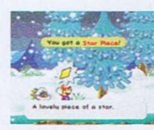


91 At the left end of the room where you enter Petal Meadows, Spring Jump straight up and grab the overhead pipe. Go hand-over-hand to its other end and drop. See the green warp pipe in the picture? Use it to warp into the background of the scene and enter the house.

FEHR OUTPOST



92 Spin Jump on the ground to the left of the Rogueport Warp Pipe for your next lump of twinkler.



93 Barely hidden behind a shrub, one screen right of the Warp Pipe.



94 Behind a broken wall as you approach the Outpost.



95 Now look in the west screen of the Outpost behind the broken wall for another bit.

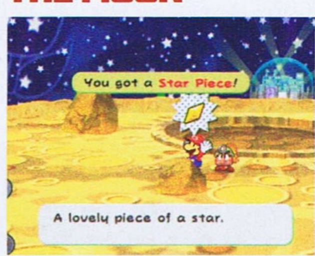


96 Look behind the bunch of crates in General White's house.



97 Spin Jump on the ground left of the cannon statue.

THE MOON

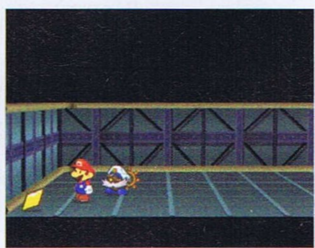


98 This bit of star's little south of the Warp Pipe to the X-Naut Fortress, behind a rock.

X-NAUT FORTRESS



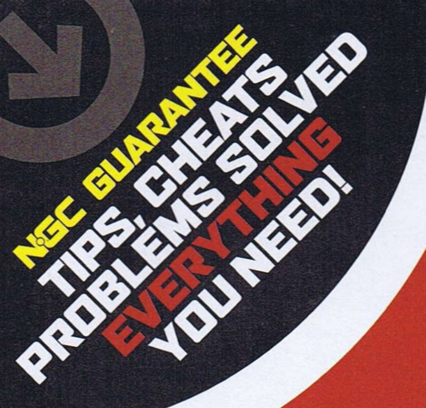
99 Drop into the teleporter room on Sublevel 2 via the ventilation shaft, then ride Yoshi across the gap to get the cog. Install it in the crane room on Sublevel 1 and snag the Star Piece. You're almost there now… only one more piece to find!





100 You'll find an open ceiling grate in a laboratory on Sublevel 2. Spring Jump through it to reach the ventilation shaft and go all the way along to the left.

And that's it! All 100 Star Pieces are yours! You should be able to get all the badges you need with them.



THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



PAPER MARIO THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR

PIT OF TRIALS

Every time you complete ten levels in the Pit of Trials, you get a badge or an item as a reward. Here's all of them:

Levels	Reward
1-10	Sleepy Stomp badge
11-20	Fire Drive badge
21-30	Zap Tap badge
31-40	Pity Flower badge
41-50	Strange Sack
51-60	Double Dip badge
61-70	Double Dip P badge
71-80	Bump Attack badge
81-90	Lucky Day badge
91-100	Return Postage badge

EASTER EGGS

Dress Mario as Waluigi
To get Mazza a purple shirt, hat and dungarees, collect both the W and the L logo and put them on.

Super Mario World melody
Wait a few seconds after receiving an email from Peach and you'll hear the music from *SMW* playing.

NES sprites
Go to sub-level 2 of the X-Naut Fortress and enter the vent shaft. Drop through the far-right vent to enter the dressing room. When you pull open your cubicle's curtain, Mario and his pals will be in glorious 8-bit-o-vision. You can't achieve this effect by entering the same cubicle in the normal way (through the door).

PIKMIN 2

CHALLENGE MODE

To unlock this, kill the Beady Long Legs at the bottom of the Spider Citadel, then take the key to the recon drone.

LOUIE LOUIE

At the Dream Den, rescue Louie from the Titan Dweevil to unlock his cooking notes. To see the Louie's Dark Secret FMV, complete all 30 arenas in Challenge mode and get a pink flower for each – that mean you can't lose a single Pikmin!

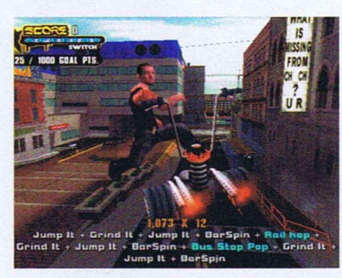
FMVS, CREDITS AND SHYACHO

Collect the 10,000 pocos you need to save Hokotate Intergalactic Delivery. That's all you have to do to see the FMVs and credits, but choose to keep playing to unlock Shyacho.

COMPLETION FMV

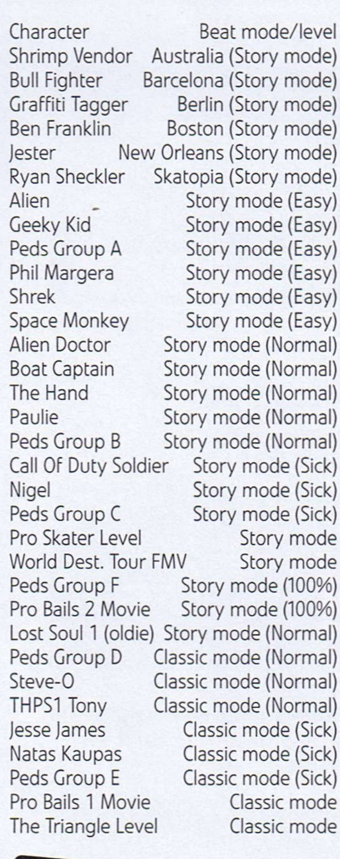
Rescue Louie and gather all the treasure to see this.

TONY HAWK'S UNDER-GROUND 2



UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

Complete the following levels or game modes to unlock the appropriate characters.



Character	Beat mode/level
Shrimp Vendor	Australia (Story mode)
Bull Fighter	Barcelona (Story mode)
Graffiti Tagger	Berlin (Story mode)
Ben Franklin	Boston (Story mode)
Jester	New Orleans (Story mode)
Ryan Sheckler	Skatopia (Story mode)
Alien	Story mode (Easy)
Geeky Kid	Story mode (Easy)
Peds Group A	Story mode (Easy)
Phil Margera	Story mode (Easy)
Shrek	Story mode (Easy)
Space Monkey	Story mode (Easy)
Alien Doctor	Story mode (Normal)
Boat Captain	Story mode (Normal)
The Hand	Story mode (Normal)
Paulie	Story mode (Normal)
Peds Group B	Story mode (Normal)
Call Of Duty Soldier	Story mode (Sick)
Nigel	Story mode (Sick)
Peds Group C	Story mode (Sick)
Pro Skater Level	Story mode
World Dest. Tour FMV	Story mode
Peds Group F	Story mode (100%)
Pro Bails 2 Movie	Story mode (100%)
Lost Soul 1 (oldie)	Story mode (Normal)
Peds Group D	Classic mode (Normal)
Steve-O	Classic mode (Normal)
THPS1 Tony	Classic mode (Normal)
Jesse James	Classic mode (Sick)
Natas Kaupas	Classic mode (Sick)
Peds Group E	Classic mode (Sick)
Pro Bails 1 Movie	Classic mode
The Triangle Level	Classic mode
Australian Cop	Classic mode (100%)
Bratwurst Vendor	Classic mode (100%)
Corn Seller	Classic mode (100%)
German Cop	Classic mode (100%)
German Drunk 3	Classic mode (100%)
Horn Player	Classic mode (100%)
Lost Soul 2	Classic mode (100%)
Metal Detector Guy	Classic mode (100%)
N.soft Skates FMV	Classic mode (100%)
Peds Group G	Classic mode (100%)
Pirate	Classic mode (100%)
Skatopia Punk	Classic mode (100%)
Zombie 2	Classic mode (100%)
Cheat Codes FMV	All gaps
Peds Group H	All gaps

X-MEN LEGENDS

UNLOCKABLES

Beat the game to unlock all of the following: Bobby Drake; Original Iceman; Colossus (non-metal); 90s Colossus; Original Beast; Original Cyclops; 80s Cyclops; Original Jean Grey; Phoenix; Original Nightcrawler; Street Clothes Magma; 90s Wolverine; Weapon X.

Also, collect all the sketchbooks in the game to unlock the secret art.



NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

When you have to clap repeatedly in Donkey Konga, don't bother. Just blow into the microphone hole instead. That way you'll get the maximum score for that 'roll'.
Simon Starkey, Nottingham



READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a mystery prize from Geraint's 'special drawer'. Chances are, it'll be a game.



1. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Da bomb

If you're getting annoyed with a red Beamos, here's a quick way to get rid of it. Pull out a bomb and walk up to it. It will see you and fire its laser, making the bomb explode. You'll take some damage when you do this, but the Beamos will be destroyed.

Tim Moule, March

2. SUPER SMASH BROS

Dream beam

For an extra long grappling beam for Samus, press Z, R, A, then rotate the D-pad through 360°. You have to press A to snare enemies with it.

Stephen Newell, Newry

3. TALES OF SYMPHONIA

Who's the boss?

When you're taking on bosses with guards, try to take out the guards first even though they do less damage. They'll be really annoying if you leave them and tackle the main boss first.

Tom Blackstone, Woking

4. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

Oi, oi, oi!

When you're skating anywhere, make sure you ollie all the time. That way you'll have plenty of speed to your wheels!

Jordan Rogers, Durham

5. SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2 (GBA)

Chocoholic

If you get stuck on Chocolate Island 2, complete the flying koopa section of the game with at least 250 left on the timer and you'll be whisked away to chocolate secret and Wendy Koopa's castle.

Sam Le Feaux, Bournemouth

6. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Skool's out

On the Jersey level, go to the train station and, as you enter, head north east and up the quarter pipe. Grind along this to unlock the 'old school level'.

Douglas Mitchell, Spalding

7. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

…Makes perfect

On stage 2 of the Ricco Harbour level, Blooper Surfing Safari, nip into the pipe that takes you to the race. The screen will fade out, and just as it starts to become visible again, press B to dive forwards onto a blooper. Now you can practice the course because the timer will not have been started.

William Oakley, Foxton

8. SECOND SIGHT

Unseen

On the 'Preparation' level, after JC's pistol training go back down the corridor towards the steps. Follow the path to the armoury and get the rifle. Change weapons so JC doesn't see it and training becomes a lot more fun… You can also now access the restricted area through the gate end.

Jack Shukman, Oxford

9. CRASH BANDICOOT FUSION (GBA)

Dance, dragon, dance!

As you start up, hold L + R to access a Spyro dancing game.

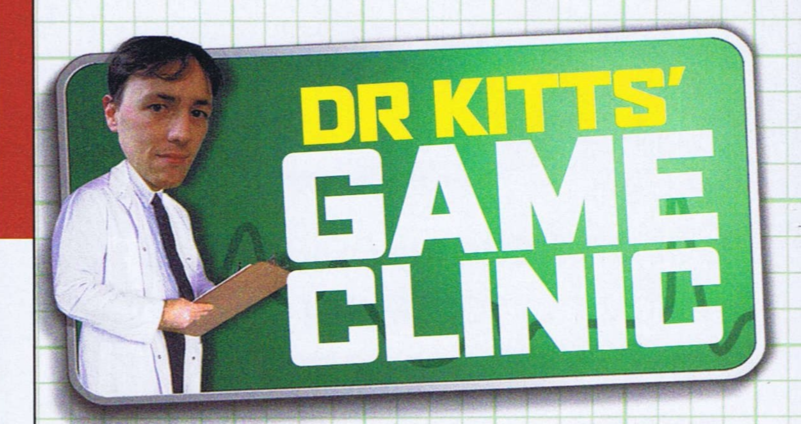
Ben Osborne, Ramsgate

10. ANIMAL CROSSING

Coel of approval

The coelacanth is a very rare fish, but I caught one! You have to be fishing during the night when it's rainy. They're worth 15,000 Bells.

Josh Hare, Glasgow





Doing it the traditional way: no anaesthetic and dirty knives.

Dr Kitts,
I hate *Pikmin 2!* I love everything about it except the stupid Snagret – the one on level seven of the Snagret Hole. I just can't beat it. Tell me how it's done. Please!
Gary Thompson, Berwick

Dr Kitts eats only the freshest vegetables – and veggie men.
The Snagret is a bit of a sod. Keep most of your 'Min well out of his reach. Using some strong reds, watch how the Snagret sometimes just pokes his head out of his hole. That's when you need to nobble him – as soon as he pokes it out, sick your Reds on him. Keep doing this, making sure you only attack him when he's being slow, and you'll beat him eventually.

Dr Kitts,
Why don't my attempts at making hybrid crops work in *Harvest Moon*? Does it mean that Tartan doesn't like me?
Toby Wollison, Brighton

Dr Kitts fears tartan after chatting up a man in a kilt…
Tartan probably doesn't care one way or the other. Not all combinations of vegetables and fruit work, and even the ones that do work won't work all the time. Try swapping your pairings – so if a melon and a strawberry didn't work, try a strawberry first, then a melon (which should make a Berryto, incidentally). Because pairings sometimes fail, when you're creating second-stage hybrids – Rare Crops – using hybrid crops, don't use your last seed or fruit of a stage one hybrid! If Tartan fails to 'cough up' a rare crop, you'll have to try to make that first-stage hybrid all over again.

Dr Kitts,
Can I send codes from my US copy of *Animal Crossing* to my friend with a UK copy?
Just about everyone

Dr Kitts has a new PAL…
Yes, you can. We've swapped things successfully by passing on codes. But you can't swap memory cards and visit their town.





Got an Action Replay? Get ready for some pure Nintendo fun with these codes.

PIKMIN 2

Master code
FTB6-CC1K-J43ZJ
7RDB-PQY3-RXHZ2

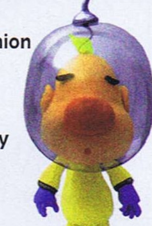
Infinite health
3EJT-7RFB-CQY33
FPG7-92QH-AKJWV

Infinite spicy spray
7Y6M-VTJK-KBG3H
Z7AR-M21C-CV6GW

Infinite bitter spray
XFYM-78VN-NPJ0D
FMK8-R9AJ-RM1XK

100 Red Pikmin in onion
VYRQ-Q9N7-Y347A
AP95-TQCR-EHG8N

D-pad Up freezes day timer
DPVZ-H0CT-Q7V68
3AX5-NNYT-7935R
E2AZ-B6QE-M0X5P

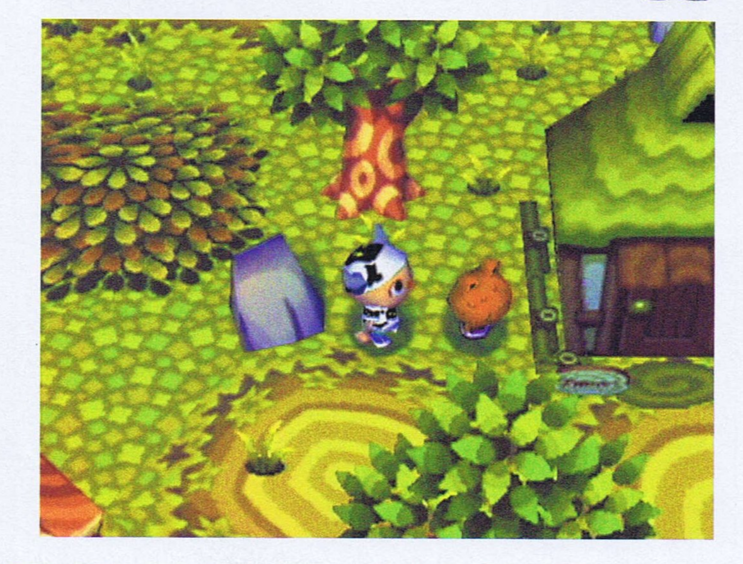



D-pad Down restores day timer
XKR2-NQYJ-KJUGY
CBNE-1YVZ-Y3C76
F77U-1M6F-C78WT
RNAX-T7VE-8QQHW

D-pad Right speeds up timer
5P22-1X8B-R3FKN
BWBV-6N3X-VPAJG
2WGV-HVRR-B339H

D-pad Left slow down timer
9M5M-GNX3-9AQW4
4BB2-045M-WYGPH
K0QJ-CQAT-4A5DA

Open all landing sites
JQMX-JY53-61XBY
47K9-Z390-439EJ



ANIMAL CROSSING

Master code
9CZW-3CR2-1ZHKV
E0GD-38RQ-7HNGZ
GNNT-H9QR-M5U9E
XCD5-765Y-HKWF3
00A3-4QN6-DHM25
2HDM-TYWJ-0FG8A
EWY9-051A-HGFCM

Infinite Bells
C01M-KU2B-BUPY3
FV2K-7BE1-ZDCQ6
D7KG-200X-4379P

Have rare NES games
T6G3-28CV-ETJBU
9MF9-A3BQ-FGVVQ
D2YE-F90A-7PZD8
8P5Z-KCMZ-ZK58J

Full bank account at Post Office
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TUMZ-4K4K-EEWVF

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7VHH-63CR-BPR7A
973D-5XDK-ZKW8J

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UUH4-3KX0-DK6FH

DONKEY KONGA

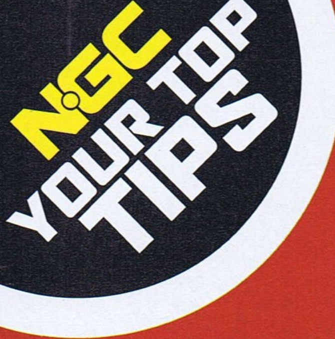
Master code
J9ZF-H17A-FRZF9
NK03-QAQB-06KD8

Tons of cash
WGGG-492N-C10D8
K8Y3-A23K-4ZY1U

Success meter always full
X641-GTMP-T1TUK
R4V6-MRV5-N0DNV
09YG-REHK-MZMUT

Don't lose points for missing
P494-6J2X-JTD2Z
YQ1B-GB6W-70NR8
P3DM-6K1Y-Y6U45
97CM-NUEV-2RNCQ





YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a cool prize. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net...

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

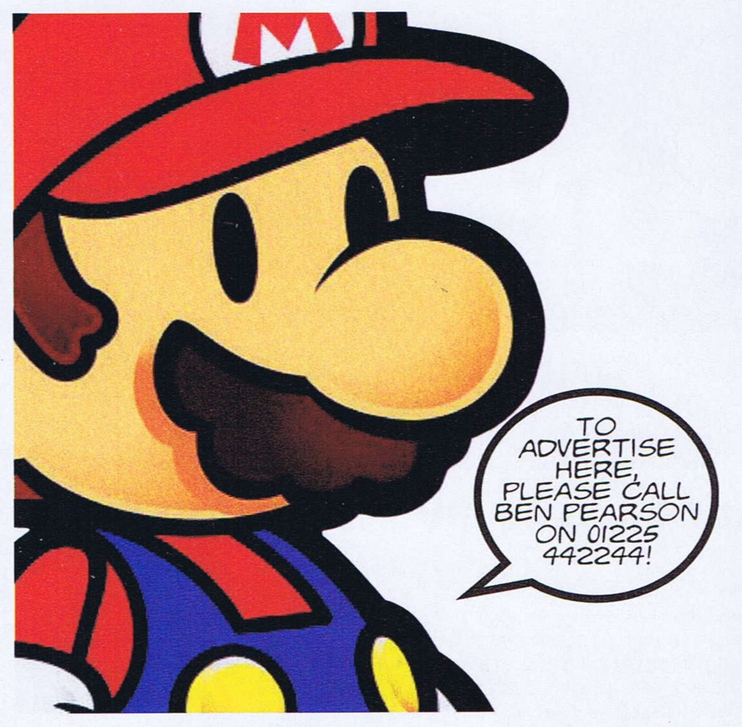
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Address ....

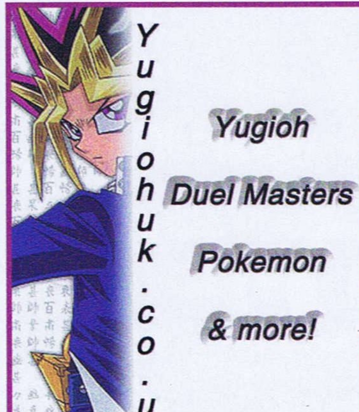
Postcode ....

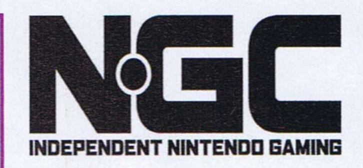
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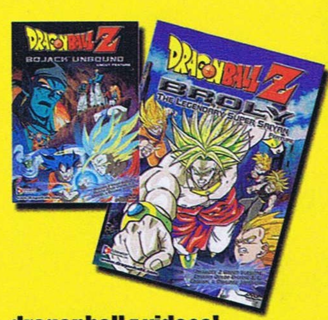
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win! a Nintendo DS or Sony PSP!!!
just answer this question. who makes GameCube?
a. nintendo or b. your mum
now call or text your answer.
call 0906 577 5551 or text your answer to: 81808

anime direct from the UK tenchi, gundam, dragon ball, escaflowne, sailormoon, inu yasha, chobits, sakura and more...

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WITNESS THE FINAL, INCREDIBLY CLOSE RESULT OF THOSE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER... I'M THE BEST ...IT IS NOW!

Everything has to end. Except infinity.

So, it's all over. There's a gaping hole left in our lives where the monthly delivery of envelopes and videotapes used to be, and a disturbingly large amount of free time left at the weekends, which is when we used to watch them.

There can only be one overall winner, and you'll see his name opposite, along with the names of all the most notable competitors. But each and every person who took part in I'm The Best is, in our minds, a success. There were hundreds of you, and the competition wouldn't have been as fierce without you. We laughed at your Virtual Reality pictures, cried at the amount of fast forwarding we had to do, and stared in disbelief at the 'adult' video one entrant sent by mistake. (You're lucky we didn't send it back home to your mum, sunshine…)

So, here's to you! You're the best! And for the top five, some final humiliation.

WINNER!

△ We asked you to dress up as *Smash Bros'* Roy. Matthew Pellett forced his dad to 'help out' by dressing as Peach. Matthew, we'll be in touch…

△ **NGC** does not recommend you cover your head with plastic. Not even if, like Rex McGee, you're dressing as Olimar. We think he survived…

△ Given Ganondorf's frequent thwartings by a mere boy, Andrew Grieve would make a much better nemesis for Rinkydink.

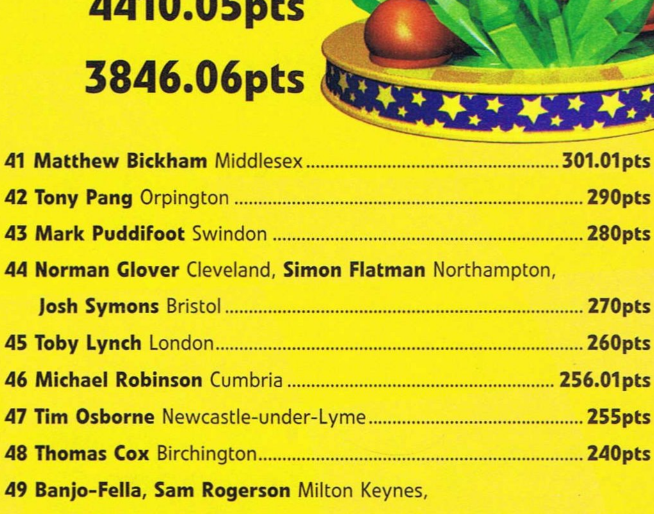
△ All the Wario wear in the world couldn't quite put Bryan Docherty past the weening post…

△ Another Roy, this time from the scary-eyed David Pugh. We're not sure who his friend is, but he can console himself that at least he wasn't made to wear a dress…

COMING SOON... SKILL CLUB

A long time ago in a magazine not so far, far away, there was Skill Club. It was simple: we set challenges, you beat them, and when you'd beaten enough we sent you a certificate to prove you're a great gamer. We love it so much, we're resurrecting it for you. Have you got the skills?

THE LEADERBOARD
THE FINAL STANDINGS



1 Matthew Pellett Spalding **6718.08pts**

2 Rex McGee Trowbridge **6712.07pts**

3 Andrew Grieve Rotherham **4563.08pts**

4 Bryan Docherty Inverkip **4410.05pts**

5 David Pugh Saffron Walden **3846.06pts**

6 Steve Brooks Broughton Astley **3761.06pts**
7 Dave Every Ellesmere Port **3590.05pts**
8 Peter Bottomley Cheshire **3084.04pts**
9 Martijn Heule The Netherlands **3014.04pts**
10 Ewan McKenzie Dumfries **2601.01pts**
11 David Lent Leeds **2516.01pts**
12 Lewis Voigtländer-Ford Milton Keynes **2305pts**
13 Dermot Ryan Mullingar **2200.05pts**
14 Chris Fletcher Stockport **2098.03pts**
15 Phil Hughes Cheshire **1837.02pts**
16 Andrew Mills Dundee **1803.03pts**
17 Rob Jones Poole **1747.02pts**
18 Dominic Stroud Gloucester **1623.03pts**
19 Michael Rothwell Wallasey **1622.02pts**
20 Ben Bryce Worthing **1617.02pts**
21 Mark Gibson Dumfries **1443.03pts**
22 Adam Pollard Dorset **870pts**
23 Simon Mason West Parley **691.01pts**
24 Michael Seaward Stanley **626.01pts**
25 Steven Limm Tamworth **621.01pts**
26 Dean Hailstone Jarrow **562.02pts**
27 Barry Lewis Dairsie **560pts**
28 Christoffer Lindgren Sweden **526.01pts**
29 Eskil Vestre Norway **500pts**
30 Andreas Nakkerud Norway **490pts**
31 Scott Littlewood Norwich **445pts**
32 David Williamson Bathgate **440pts**
33 Daniel Sneddon Bingley **401.01pts**
34 Gordon Yeung Cardiff **386.01pts**
35 Josh Jones Barnstaple **380pts**
36 Josh Ryan Dursley **350pts**
37 Alasdair Campbell Elston **335pts**
38 Andrew McGrae Southport **330pts**
39 Gareth Brownlow Kilrea, **Matthew Reynolds** Tamworth **325pts**
40 Mr S Aberdare **315pts**
41 Matthew Bickham Middlesex **301.01pts**
42 Tony Pang Orpington **290pts**
43 Mark Puddifoot Swindon **280pts**
44 Norman Glover Cleveland, **Simon Flatman** Northampton, **Josh Symons** Bristol **270pts**
45 Toby Lynch London **260pts**
46 Michael Robinson Cumbria **256.01pts**
47 Tim Osborne Newcastle-under-Lyme **255pts**
48 Thomas Cox Birchington **240pts**
49 Banjo-Fella, Sam Rogerson Milton Keynes, **Jack Rountree** France **235pts**
50 Hollie Eggleton Trowbridge **230pts**
51 Chris Bowers Kent **225pts**
52 Julia McClay Langley Middleton **Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth, **Chris Richards** Pontypridd **220pts**
53 Harold Rooney-Nugent London, **David McDonald** Warwick, **David Cathrine** Edinburgh **215pts**
54 Matthew Reynolds Tamworth **210pts**
55 Ian Steadman Farnham Common **206.01pts**
56 James Walker Worthing **205pts**
57 David Gruber Norwich **200pts**
57 David Cathrine Edinburgh **195pts**
58 Andy Whittle Leigh **191.01pts**

So, we're bringing back the 'slightly' less competitive but no less enjoyable Skill Club. We're open to suggestions for challenges you'd like us to run or games you'd like us to push you to the limit on. Write in and tell us what'll get you playing better, faster and more. Because if you're not in it, we won't enjoy it half as much.

THANK YOU FOR ENTERING! YOU'RE THE BEST GAMERS IN THE WORLD!

HEY! IT'S THE CONTINUATION OF...

GAME ON!

NGC READER CHALLENGES



We've been sent challenges for a great range of games this month – *TimeSplitters* has so many possibilities it's a real favourite and we get loads for it, but it's good to see some other titles yielding minigame nectar.

To encourage you to send us new Game On ideas, we're giving a brand-new Gamecube game drawn at random from special Geraint's special drawer to the person who sends in the best Game On each month. Send your ideas to Game On, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

ISS2









YELLOW FEVER

Stephen Crow, Whitstable

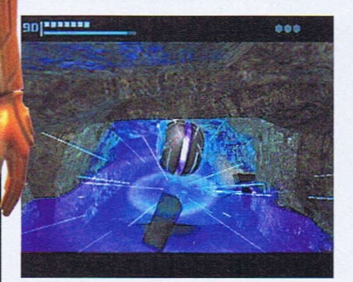
This challenge, Stephen assures us "should prove to be an exciting, fast thinking game with lots of action". As long as you leave your morality at the door, that is, because one thing it's not going to be is a very gentlemanly game.

You have to get all 10 outfield players (so, not including the keeper) shown the yellow card.

However, the rules are strict: the game level must be Real, playing time is five minutes and there is no extra time allowed. You have to finish will all 11 players on the pitch, so you mustn't get any red cards. If a player gets sent off, you fail the challenge. No subs are allowed, and you can't change your players' positions after kick off either.

YELLOW CARDS  ALL 10  8-9  5-7

METROID PRIME







PING PONG

Nick Hawkins, Harlow

A simple challenge for you this time. First, find a straight corridor with two doors, one at either end – Nick recommends the one leading to the artefact temple, but there are others dotted around. And make sure it's a straight corridor; one with a bend won't be suitable.

Fire a missile at one of the doors and wait for the message to appear telling you that you can't open the door with that weapon. That's okay, because you don't want the door to open. **Counting your initial hit as the first one, see how many times you can make the missile go up and down the corridor before it explodes.** Make sure you don't get in the way of your warhead or you'll stop its progress!

HITS  8+  5-7  3-4

ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

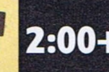




ROLY POLY

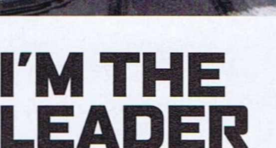
Adam Marcinkiw, Wilmslow

An old game, this, but it's a fun challenge. And the game was included on the Collector's Edition disc, so you can play it on your Gamecube as well. Playing as Goron Link, take the north exit out of Clock Town, but don't go too far. **Now curl up into a ball and roll around Clock Town at full speed, killing as many chu-chus as you can in a single lap.** And we mean a single lap – you mustn't do any backtracking to get any little squeakers you've missed.

TIME  2:00+ 1:00+  0:30+

BURNOUT 2





I'M THE LEADER

Paul Coombs, Nottingham



An ace challenge, this, and one you'll have fun with. **Unlock Pursuit mode, then, rather than trying to catch the 'criminal' car, try to overtake it.** It's easiest on the long version of the beachfront course. The longer you stay in front, the better your medal. But be warned, the other car will accelerate to ridiculous speeds to try to regain the advantage, and if he clips you it triggers some spectacular crashes. Paul tells us "I had my car spin into the sky and somersault across literally half the map".

SECONDS IN FRONT  20+  15-19  10-14

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

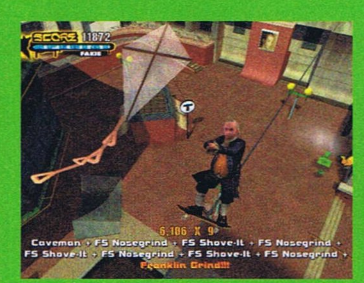
Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to...

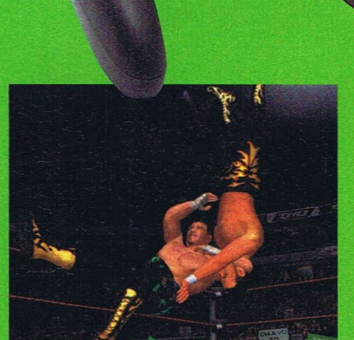
GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in...


PIKMIN 2


PAPER MARIO


TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2


WWE DAY OF RECKONING

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your name and address so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a shiny new game from our stack of shiny new games – it's pot luck. Which one will you receive?

'Greasy underwear'

While sifting through the latest load of still-greasy underwear fresh out of the washing machine I discovered to my consternation that I had left my copy of *Metroid: Fusion* in my trouser pocket. Unbelievably, when I put it into my GBA it still appeared to work perfectly, if not better than before, with all saves still intact. After a full cycle in the washing machine. Amazing!

And then I began to wonder, I mean, exactly how much damage can your average Nintendo console and related products take? After all the other various bumps and bruises my Nintendo collection has taken over the years, whatever next? GBA SPs being used as bullet-proof vests? Can Gamecubes really provide effective shielding against nuclear attacks? Will old SNESs welded together make good hulls for deep-sea exploration craft? Will N64 controllers become used as lethal weapons in some new variation of traditional martial arts? GBA carts the new ammunition of choice for the SAS? Something worth investigating, methinks.

Arthur Plant, Thornhill

***I washed a memory card once. In fact I might have washed it several times as I had no idea how long it had been hiding in the little key pocket of my trousers. Sadly my half-finished* Metroid Prime *save was still there, taunting me. But however robust Nintendo hardware is now, my SNES copy of* Super Tennis *only works if I use a bit of plasticene to wedge it diagonally in the cart slot.* Ed**



'Nearly extinct'

My sister bought *Pokémon Leaf Green* not so long ago. She's glued to it 24/7, and she keeps on saying that it beats all the other games in the world. Although this gets really annoying, I can't help but admit that she is partially right. I can still remember when I got *Pokémon Red* in 1999. It rocked back then. Not only because it was a new Japanese game with cute small monsters battling each other, but because it was so simple. Even my five-year-old cousin could play it with only very small translation problems.

Nowadays if you ask people what they think about Pokémon they usually say something like: "It's gay" or, "Come on, Pokémon is extinct". Still there are more and more Pokémon games all the time. Perhaps Pokémon is a victim of its own success. People don't play Pokémon games now like they did back in 2000, and maybe that's the reason people don't buy them any more. Pokémon reduces the sense of being cool in most schools.

But what is a Pokémon game really? If you scrape away the Gengars and Bulbasaurs you find a very decent RPG with levelling up, learning new attacks and battling gym bosses. And when did RPGs make a person uncool? Do characters alone have that much influence over people? Maybe Pokémon was just too good for gamers to really digest back then or maybe people thought it to be too simple after a year or two. Although Pokémon is nearly extinct now almost everyone who played *Red*, *Blue*, *Gold* or *Silver* has to admit that they were one of Nintendo's best creations ever.

Johan Bagenholm, Sweden

***Pokémon isn't the all-consuming global 'craze' it was a few years ago, but even the latest GBA versions have sold far more copies than anything on Gamecube. As your sister will tell you, it isn't extinct – the original fans have just grown out of it.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

I don't usually complain about games.
Tom Dillow, Griffydam
***Good.* Ed**

Lots of times I have had friends.
J Watkins (anonymous)
***Despite being anonymous?* Ed**

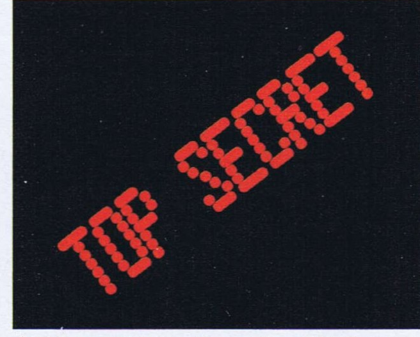
The other day, I thought of a great idea, Sonic AND Mario in ONE GAME!
Damian Doyley, Goldthorpe
***Groan…* Ed**



Enclosed are some pictures of me in my football shirt, standing next to a drum kindly given to me by an angry dog called Butch.
Kristian Romaniewicz, via email
***Very nice.* Ed**

It was excellent, it had midgets in multicoloured spandex.
Chris Morrison, Bromley
***And then you woke up.* Ed**

The over eager player in possession of the red shells releases them before the effects of the arse whomping have passed.
David Yarrow, via email
***Nobody likes it when that happens.* Ed**



△ Warning! Major spoilers underneath this scratch box, but only if you rub it real nice.

'Revolution'

I'm sending this to you because I need to ask when exactly the Nintendo Revolution will come out and what it will look like. Can you put it in your magazine?

Ibro Alfa, Aldenham

***Well, I was sworn to secrecy but since you asked so nicely I've printed a picture of the Revolution plus its release date under this special lottery-style scratch box. To reveal it, gently rub the black area with a cotton bud for precisely three hours, while making monkey noises. It helps if you invite a few friends over to watch while you do this.* Ed**



HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to): Lewis Miller, Hitchin; Joe Shepherd, via email; Jeroen Cuvelier, Belgium; Remed Ali, Cardiff; Mark Eyles, via email; James Bowden, Waterlooville; Jakob Solvang, Norway; Warren Mason, via email; Simon Langdon, Ipswich; Ian Wallbridge, Sheffield; Jamie Williams, Horsley; Caitlin McCulloch, Glasgow; Adam Martin, St.Helens; Jamie Gordon, Bedfordshire; Chris Adams, via email; Jamie Briggs, via email; Craig Brown, Airdrie; Adam Kenney, Worcester; Adam Butcher and Ben Claxton, South Woodford; Oliver Beatson, Eastbourne; Darren Revell, Plymouth; Chris Poskitt, Doncaster;

'Nasty thing'

I have found a nasty thing in Zelda. *Majora's Mask* and *Wind Waker* are centuries apart, right? And Tingle is in both. So Tingle's either an immortal pervert or there have been generations of these freaks, passing down the green spandex gimp suit and stupid Koolo-limpa catchphrase!
Adam Parker, Chester

***You've made me think about Tingle breeding now, which is not an image I ever wanted in my head. Thanks.* Ed**

'Does suck'

About this whole new Zelda thing… For a start, you said that the new looks will turn heads in a way cel-shading never could. That's a damn lie. Everything nowadays is being remade into Next Generation Graphics, and it's a shame. Nintendo just seem to have followed the market this time, and it really does suck. Think of this: Nintendo practically dropped all of the previous characters/species, so does this mean they are going to drop the Rito people and the characters from this game too? If that happens, I'm not buying it. It seems all they're doing is trying to improve on what they've done, which is great, but it seems they're way too quick just to drop something to make something 'better'. The new Zelda looks a bit too much like a Lord of the Rings for my liking, and it's not for the better.
Mike Davidson, via email

***Hang on a minute. So if the characters from* Wind Waker *are dropped, you're not interested in the new game. But if they bring back the creatures from* Ocarina*, rendered in a beautiful new graphics engine, they're selling out. The new Zelda is the first instance I can recall of Nintendo really listening to the fans, so I think you're very much in the minority here.* Ed**

'Smile painfully'

I snuck into the office last night and look what I found in the bottom of Paul's drawer – an imprisoned Worldy Bloke™ being forced to smile painfully and answer calls swiftly. Damn that Enjiki!
George Armstrong, Bath

***Poor guy. Looks like something terrible has happened to his hand during his down-and-out years – sort of like the scruffy old fella here in Bath whose hair has turned into a solid mass of dried poo.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

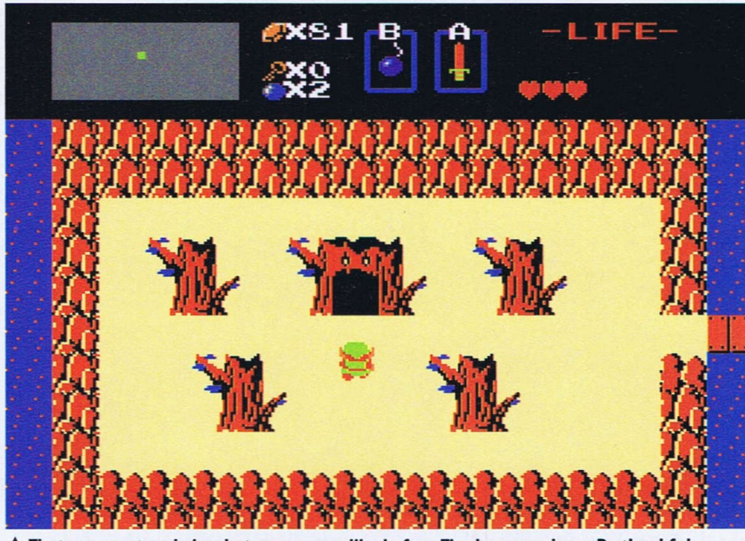
I think that *Donkey Konga* should come with some moisturiser for your hands - mine are constantly aching from clapping!
Lucy-Jane Preston, Gloucester
***Mine ache from constantly punching myself in the face.* Ed**

Tonight I discovered that you can plant fruit to make new trees, and set about completely enclosing Grizzly's front door in a fledgling orchard. Let's wait a few days, and see if this bear can hack it in the woods, huh? Huh? HUH? I hope he never gets out again, the malignant malcontent.
Mr Moon, Loonsvil
***Good work.* Ed**

Whilst many people say that it is unimportant to the game, I only partially agree.
Mark Nisbet, Galston
***Me too.* Ed**

Not everyone goes on about them as much as they should.
Danny Rafferty, via email
***Not fair, is it?* Ed**

Oh but you got rid of your Advance for that cool beans DS. Can't go on it now.
Joe Woodhouse, Oswaldtwistle
***Simple solution – don't get rid of your 'cool beans' GBA.* Ed**



△ **That grey rectangle is what maps were like before Tingle came along. Be thankful.**

'Sort of map'

I finally figured out why games are getting easier. I recently purchased the Zelda limited edition disc, which has Zelda 1 and 2 for the NES and the two N64 titles. It seems to me the only reason the older games were more difficult is because the player starts the game with no idea of where to go, what to do, or any concept of the story that isn't read in the synopsis. On the other hand, with the newer games there is a useful, if sometimes condescending, tutorial which guides you through the game until you get to grips with it.

I started Zelda NES in an area with a cave with some old hobo who gives you your sword, and three directions to go in. Now without endless trial and error there is no way for the player to find out how to get to level one. Or, for that matter, if there is even a level one to get to. There is a black rectangle which is meant to be some sort of map, but turns out to be no use at all. Compare this with *Ocarina*, where you're slowly brought into the story, enabling the player to get involved in it. There is a decent map and you actually know where it is you have to go at first. Games are only getting easier because the developers realised that we are not psychic, and we need a basic idea of what is happening and where to go.
Nicky Dykes, Glasgow

***Games are getting easier? What about* Ikaruga*? Ha!* Ed**

'Judas Priest'

Here's something I just realised while listening to veteran metal group Judas Priest. One of Priest's guitarists is named KK Downing. Do you reckon Ninty could have been influenced by this and named KK in *Animal Crossing* after him?
Shaun Laird, via email

***I thought it was because KK is called Totakeke in the Japanese version, but given the extreme cleverness of the* Animal Crossing *translation and the double meanings* somebody from a few issues back. Anyway, the Pikmin still thought your joke was about as funny as a Capcom Gamecube exclusive. Better than this month's, but not by much.**

David Waters Essex; Todd Marsh, via email; Daniel Entwistle, Notlob; Liam Fisher, Romford; Helen McCartney, Co Durham; Dave Allen, Southampton; Ben Craig, Oxford; Timothy Moule, March; James Austin, Basingstoke; Patrick Salazar and Charlie Richardson, Poulton; Joe Cook, via email; Nick, Bauke, Mike, Jack; Alex Stafford, Sheffield; Stefan, Canterbury; James Austin, Basingstoke; Tom Dillow, Griffydam. Also, Danny Rafferty, who is in the bonus letters bit above and wrote the Grintendo joke for issue 100, which we somehow credited to

CORRECTION CORNER

On page 36 of **NGC**/99 the character for the new *GoldenEye Rogue Agent* looks like his head has been opened for brain surgery or the picture has just been overlapped or something. Either way, punish the monkeys who did this and make them burn in hell with the leprechauns!
Tony Southion, London

***That's because Paul shoved some old N64s in Odd Job's head, in a vain attempt to make* Rogue Agent *as good as the real* GoldenEye*. There will be no leprechauns here today.* Ed**



Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR NINTENDO JOKES! MAKE THEM GOOD AND YOU WIN A GAME. BUT IF MR WHITE FAILS TO SEE THE FUNNY SIDE, THE YELLOW PIKMIN DIES. HORRIBLY.
THIS MONTH: 'JOKE' INFLICTED BY JAY BOND. THANKS.



WRITE TO... GRINTENDO, MAILBOX, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

of some of the animal names (for example, Tom Nook is an animal called a tanuki in Japanese), perhaps there really is a Judas Priest fan working at Nintendo. **Ed**

'Axe break'

Is it just me or does an axe break really easily? Lately I've been trying to thin out the trees in my village because there are millions of really thick clumps and I've been through two axes now. And you can't use them on villagers either… I tried to decapitate Pecan, the chipmunk who has the annoying tendency to say "chipmunk" after every sentence. Which is stupid.
Christopher George, Perthshire

I'm told **Animal Crossing 2** *will incorporate chainsaws and a 'rampage' button. You read it here first.* **Ed**


△ Move along now, nothing to kill here… until the *GTA*-inspired *Animal Crossing 2: Takedown*.

'Fail to meet'

One of the worst things about games is the big disappointments, the games that were destined to be brilliant but fell short or just tripped over their shoelaces at the starting line. There are some games you preview that look to be great, brilliant games when you first look at them but then upon release they fail to meet up to expectations – *Starfox Adventures*, *Kirby's Air Ride* and *Enter The Matrix* to name a few. I think some developers spend too much time actually getting the game out there and making it look good without concentrating as much on actually making the game good.

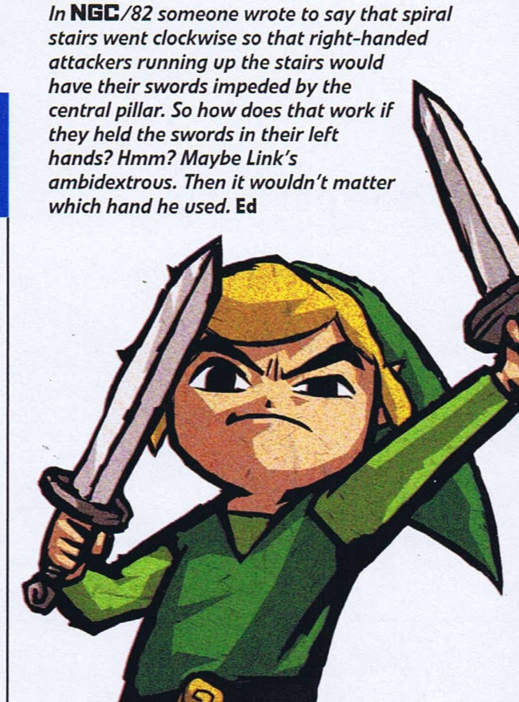
Another thing that irritates me is publishers trying to push games out before they're complete, utterly spoiling them. It should be the developers that decide when it's done rather than the money-grubbing publishers.
Daniel Baxendale, Macclesfield

Glad you got that off your chest? **Ed**

'You're wrong'

A couple of issues back you said that Link was left-handed, since he's holding the sword in his left hand. You're wrong. To hold a sword correctly you always use your left hand, while your right holds the shield, using it as a battering ram as well as just a defensive item. Many people don't know that though, so don't worry.
Jon Salter, Birmingham

In **NGC***/82 someone wrote to say that spiral stairs went clockwise so that right-handed attackers running up the stairs would have their swords impeded by the central pillar. So how does that work if they held the swords in their left hands? Hmm? Maybe Link's ambidextrous. Then it wouldn't matter which hand he used.* **Ed**



SO TELL ME THIS...

The NGC Think-O-Tron knows all…

Why did Free Radical push back TimeSplitters 3 to a vague Q1 2005?
James Lamond, Streetly

As Shigsy himself once said, a delayed game is eventually good but a bad game is bad forever.

1. How safe am I with a third-party memory card? I hear that they sometimes wipe saved games, but I don't really want to fork out £25 for a 16-meg official card when I can get a third-party 32-meg one for £15.
2. When will we know the release date for TS: Future Perfect?
3. When is it likely to be?
4. Will you ever be able to give away Gamecube demo discs with the mag?
Mark Johnson, Fleet

1. When you're talking about data that's taken hundreds of irretrievable hours of your life to collect, the question you should ask is 'do you want to trust it to a significantly less reliable third-party card just for the sake of saving a few quid?'
2. When the folks at EA finalise their 2005 line-up.
3. March-ish.
4. We gave away a Splinter Cell demo with NGC/82, but it was so expensive we were only able to put it on the copies sold through one chain store.

About six months back you reviewed Mr Driller 2 for GBA, saying that it was 'out now'. Was it actually released, though? Every shop assistant I have asked about it looks at me as if I were some sort of madman, and very possibly a danger to their unborn children. If Mr Driller 2 has not been released yet, do you know when it will be?
Steven Tucker, Widnes

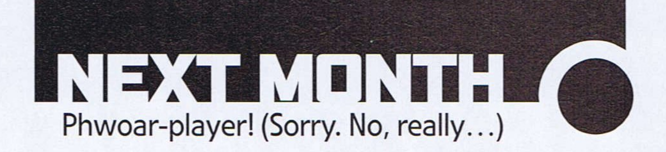
Mr Driller 2 should be available in early December.

1. Will the DS be compatible with the same link cable that allowed GBA content to be downloaded from the Gamecube?
2. Where can I buy one of these cables from and how much will it cost?
Mr J Cena, via email

1. No.
2. If your local games shop hasn't got one in stock they should be able to order one for you. It costs around £10.

If I buy a US Nintendo DS, will I be able to use the charger in this country?
Michael Allen, via email

You'll need to get a stepdown convertor, otherwise the 110-volt US charger will fry when it gets a blast of 240-volt UK power. Alternatively, your UK GBA charger should work just fine.



Phwoar-player! (Sorry. No, really…)

METROID

In-depth guide to Echoes – plus first DS Hunters reviewed!

ZELDA

Four Swords hits the UK – get our final verdict!

PLUS! TimeSplitters Future Perfect – WORLD EXCLUSIVE FIRST PLAY!

SUPER MARIO 64 DS

The game everybody's talking about – read the definitive review only in our brand-new DS-dedicated section! (Plus Wario Ware, Pokémon Dash, PictoChat – all rated!)

BONUS!

- Free gift to please every GC owner!
- Call of Duty and Prince of Persia reviewed!
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- 2005 – your countdown starts here!

Magazine contents subject to change – but only for the better!

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PROPHESYING THE NEWS OF TOMORROW WITH REAL-LIFE FUTUROLOGY

MADAME GREENER *Predicts...*

Looking into the future through crossed eyes...

THIS MONTH: 2005 REVIEW SCORES

By the High Street calendar, which sees the tinsel and baubles going up in mid-September, Christmas must be all over and done with by now. So Madame Greener turns her randomly winking eye to 2005, and uses numerology (and not, say, a little plastic roulette wheel she got out of a cracker last year) to predict the digits that NGC will be chalking up on the new year scoreboard.

HOW IT WORKS

In a nutshell: take a birthday or full name, use a calculator or brain electric to add up the digits until you get a number between one and nine (or one of the two 'magic' numbers, 11 and 22), then see the future. It's so simple and neat as to be almost totally unbelievable.

1 By doing the maths on the digits in *Killer 7's* birthday (November 13th 2002, the day it was announced), we get its Challenge Numbers. And it's mixed news from these numeric soothsayers. The challenge number for 'later life' – launch time, basically – is zero, which points to a game free of unsightly blemishes. Good. But the 'entire life' number is two, meaning that Capcom's arty produce is "sensitive about being criticised, and unlikely to be assertive." La Greener's diagnosis: *Killer 7* isn't as original or innovative as we're all expecting. Let's say it'll get 80%.

2 Take all the letters in *Geist's* name (yes, *all five*!), bung them in the numerology machine, and out squirts the Expression Number. It's a six, and that means Nintendo's ghostly thingamajig is "responsible, balanced, and full of love" and "especially suited to a career looking after the old or sick." This clearly isn't working.

3 Special Traits time. These are calculated via the frequency of letters in a full name – a name like *Advance Wars Under Fire*. There are lots of average frequencies here (for example, two Cs, Ls and Us), which screams "fun, but not overly so". Meanwhile, an overload of Es, Ns and Ws gives the game "a tendency to concentrate on too many things at once". Nothing special, over-complicated play… we give *AWUF* (ugh) 60% or so. 'Course, if they change the name, we're screwed.

4 Working out a game's 'personality' really is as simple as taking the day of its birth. So new *Zelda*, effectively 'born' as the original Spaceworld demo on August 24th 2000, is "emotional" and "likely to play a strong role in mediating disputes and ending conflicts". It's so good it'll bring about world peace – that's 100%!

5 Another Special Traits analysis on the lip-smacking *Starfox 2* turns out more sixes than an eggbox-checking machine – all you numerologists out there will know that this means "excessively harsh leadership", suggesting to us that the game's on-rails play might prove claustrophobic. Throw in "strong traditions", and a total lack of threes ("no creative impulse"), and it means you're playing an unoriginal, unstructured, unpleasant game there. 60% max? Fox McCloud's silver lining really has faded.

6 We've saved Planes of Expression, another letter-frequency nightmare, for *Resident Evil 4*. More than half its letters are in the 'Creative/Inspired' column, which means Ambition! Movement! And, of course, creativity and inspiration. This game will work hard to make you happy (the Physical letters), but its low Mental score and high Emotional tally makes it likely to "get carried away with emotions at the expense of all else". An 'experience' more than a game, we reckons, and so worth 80%.

AND THE PREDICTIONS...

Killer 7: 80%. A real – get this! – *killer*, but with as many new ideas as a sarnie.

Zelda: 100%. Second Coming of Christ to coincide with game's release; no-one to notice.

Advance Wars Under Fire: 60%. Swiftly and efficiently undoing years of good work on Game Boy Advance.

Starfox 2: 60%. Hiroshi Yamauchi to use laser-eye beams to burn down Namco's offices in revenge.

Resident Evil 4: 80%. Scares in massive steaming dollops, but a little lacking in actual 'game'.

Madame Greener will be stripped bare (*anything but that!* – Ed) in a future issue.

PREDICTION RESULTS

In **NGC**/98, Madame Greener threw some runes about and got her future juice pumping over the Nintendo DS launch. The results:



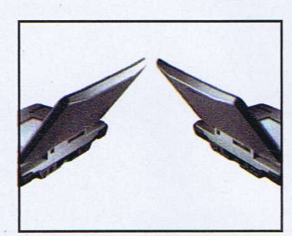
1. Sony to delay the PSP.
Nothing concrete, but the rumour monkeys are giggling in agreement.



2. DS to miss 'Q1 2005' European launch.
No, but we're sure The Big N will disappoint Europe if they can.



3. *Grand Theft Auto DS* announcement.
M Greener gets her celestial wires crossed with GBA *GTA*.



4. Nintendo to quietly drop DS internet play.
It *has* been all quiet on this front since E3, but still – *nul points*.



5. Reggie to lead DS vs PSP war of words.
Bang on! Reg spewed flames on the topic of PSP battery life.

TOTAL SCORE



Incredibly, Madame Greener's success rate is improving. Still, she also predicts a Christmas comeback for Ta'tu.

TOP 10: CLICHÉD POSES

Give yourself a kiss for each one you spot on a game box.



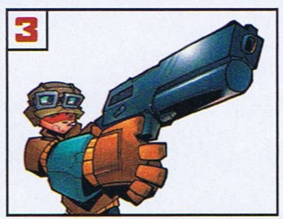
1 T&A

Quintessential game girl: frozen at the tail-end of a Wella-advert head flick, and – wouldn't you know it – perfectly positioned for showing off three of her four special bumps. She might as well put her hands on her hips and wink. We'd like that.



2 POWER PUNCH

Ever since Mario discovered he could get free money by head-butting bricks, he's been doing this one at every opportunity. Sometimes he'll even have a Star or gem in his hand to show off how good he is at collecting Stars and gems. Yes, clever boy,



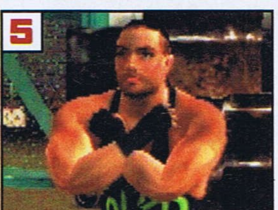
3 ACTION MAN

A Free Radical fave – the shooty equivalent of a vintage catalogue model, staring off at some distant evil with guns pointing in roughly the same direction. Probably the result of the artist's boss commenting, "Nice, but can you make it a little more *fighty*?"



4 CAR-NAGE

Box shot of choice for every driving game since 1944's *Gentlemanly Lessons in Obeying the Highway Codification*. Perfect for mums tasked with picking something racy for kiddo; bad for kiddo who discovers the game itself is none 2 fast or furious.



5 BOUNCER

It's what wrestlers do: cross their meat-arms, look mildly annoyed, and – apparently – stand on a box. Which is why The Rock got famous through the stunning 'one eyebrow up' improv. We've seen this posture from tiny French skirt-wearer Asterix. Nice try, little one.



6 DAY DREAM

Bad beasts spend all their game-time waggling their arms and making faces. But try to take a photo and you'll inevitably get them thinking about what to have for their tea. Because no-one's brave enough to snap their fingers in front of their face and yell, "Hel-loooo?".



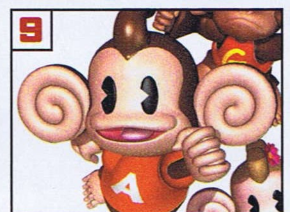
7 ROAD RAGE

Go-karts are fun. Especially if you're a rich videogame star who can ride them for fun all day, right? Not Mario and pals (and imitators like the idiot Crash Bandicoot), who are routinely pictured as though someone's just stuck a banana right up their exhaust pipe.



8 HELLO MUM

Come on, mushroom man – you're supposed to be helping publicise a multi-million dollar entertainment production here, not do the 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?' contestant wave. Perhaps Toad's trying to avoid anyone noticing how delicious he might be.



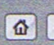
9 SUPERMAN

Although it's nice to imagine a massive background explosion forcing this fountain of flying monkeys, it's been carefully engineered by The Suits to suggest 'action!' with a capital 'I'. Not funny if you've ever actually had a monkey go for your face, believe us.



10 NECK PAIN

Actually, not all *that* clichéd when we think about it.


http://www.internetcorrespondent.co.uk

YOUR INTERNET CORRESPONDENT

The best of the 'net several weeks after it happens.

▪ In the absence of wannabe Dr Frankensteins taking a screwdriver and spraycan to their consoles, we stuff our virtual stomachs this month with the food of love. And as archives of videogame music go, you can't go far wrong with The Videogame Music Archive – babysitter to 16,000-odd MIDI (read: '80s synth) game tune remakes that take in everything from NES to Gamecube. Mostly neat, but whoever re-composed the GC start-up noise needs special help now.
> www.vgmusic.com
>

▪ Ears objecting to the bits of vgmusic.com that sound like the death rattle of 40 giant robots? Try The Minibosses and The Advantage – two bands who share a) stupid names and b) the ability to make guitars and drums re-create your favourite videogame tunes. Their Mega Man and Metroid tributes are very 'happenings', but the bit we enjoyed best was learning that The Advantage are currently touring with "The Octopus Project" and "Neil Hamburger".
> www.theadvantageband.com
> www.minibosses.com
>

▪ Nestling somewhere in the middle of everything above, VGMix brings you mp3s of home-made videogame music redoings. That means the Super Mario Bros theme with a pounding drum-'n'-bass beat pasted on top, re-imaginings of classics like – uh? – Betrayal at Kondor, and, inevitably somehow, "Zelda Rave". There are some real gems pumping away in the site's long, long list of tunes, and intelligent reviews from registered site users. House!
> www.vgmix.com
>

▪ Turns out the 'gameboyzz orchestra', who we mentioned a few issues back, aren't the only people churning out something approximating to 'music' on a humble Game Boy. The Gameboy Music Club – who have chosen German as their language of choice – use Nintendo's portoconsole to spill out the kind of sounds that happen when your TV goes wrong. They've got a ton of pictures of pretty people playing Game Boy in cool places, too – Nintendo UK's marketing department will be panting like a dog near meat.
> www.gameboymusicclub.org
>

//got a link?//
Got a Nintendo-related link for us? Email it to ngcyic@hotmail.com

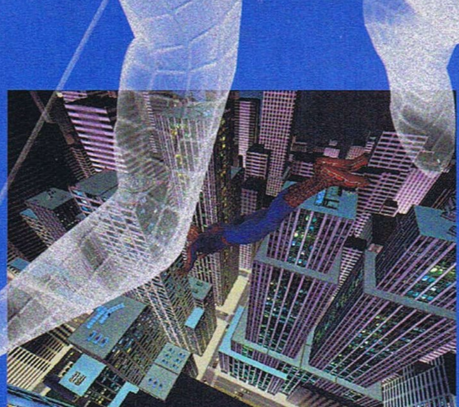
THE MAKING OF...

SPIDER-MAN THE MOVIE 2



ngc00.boxes.s_man.jpg

Spider-Man and all related characters: ™ & © Marvel Characters, Inc. Spider-Man 2, the movie: © 2004 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



△ Words fail us. Except the very basic: "Woah!"



△ Despite the graphics being a little less detailed than we'd like, they do mean you're able to swing fast and get a real sense of the city. Just a shame about those flat clouds, really.

FILED BY: MARK GREEN



When *Spider-Man 2* senior producer Gregory Jones told us that, after finishing the game, he'd seen a giant Spider-Man head split open and sweets come spilling out of it onto the ground, we thought he was referring to some kind of terrible feverish post-deadline nightmare.

But it actually happened. As the end neared for coding team Treyarch, a giant piñata – modelled on Spidey's bonce and stuffed with candies – was hung from the ceiling of the company's Los Angeles offices. On the final day, it was thwocked open by way of celebration – and, we're sure, to relieve two years' worth of development stress in the way that only smashing your lead character square in the skull can.

> "HE'D SEEN A SPIDER-MAN HEAD SPLIT AND SWEETS SPILL ONTO THE GROUND"

Gregory was the perfect boss for *Spider-Man 2*, having worked on both the last Spidey game and a Dreamcast conversion of the older Nintendo 64 version. His mission started early: while you were sucking popcorn in front of the first movie, Gregory was prepping his team of 90-or-so programmers, support coders and testers for 18 months of hard graft on the sequel. Under the unnerving gaze of Marvel and Sony Pictures (and a life-size office Spider-Man doll that was quickly adopted as the team's mascot), they got to work with just one thing guiding their thoughts: Spidey don't mean a thing if he ain't got that swing.

"The way the first movie brought Spidey's mid-air acrobatics to life was a huge inspiration for us," recalls Gregory. "We actually had the idea to really go for that web-swinging angle during the first game, and when we saw how well the film pulled it off, we knew we had to match it. We got straight down to making the webs attach to buildings and rustling up some proper physics."

Everyone at Treyarch got to pick up a controller and play with what the coders came up with, helping to nail down the right 'feel' and pinpoint iffy bits of physics. This was all *Spider-Man 2* was for the first few months: a mission to give the player both a feeling of complete control and that sense of *being* Spidey. It worked. "Seeing non-team members flying around and having a blast was very inspiring," says Gregory. "We knew

HIGH TIME

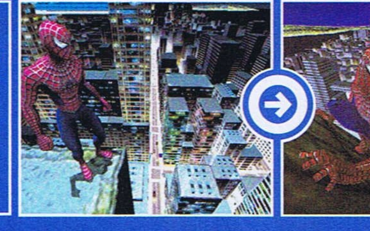


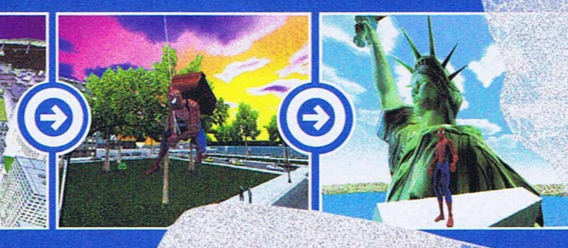
Fact: one of Spider-Man 2's neatest features – the camera zooming right up and out every time you pause to show an overview of the entire city – was a piece of pie for Gregory and co. to get in. As you play, there's always a low-res version of New York ready in memory, in case you suddenly decide to stand on a tall building and gaze at the scenery, so Treyarch were able to use that rather than pull a map off the disc.

Publisher: Activision	Highest Gamecube chart position: 1
Developer: Treyarch	
Release date: 30th Apr 04	Reviewed: NGC/86, 84%

NY SEE

Treyarch's city-builders mapped two kilometres by six kilometres of The Big Apple, cramming in all the big landmarks – including the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, and the coffee house from Friends. All right, not that last one.







△ Tying up criminal types to lampposts after apprehending them is one of the fun things you can do in the game. You can insert your own "Sorry for leaving you hanging around" joke.

it was a revolution compared to the first movie game."

But as the king of the swingers hurled himself around Treyarch's monitors like a spandex-clad monkey, an idea was forming that would bring him back down to earth – literally. Rather than echo the previous game's strict missions, stealthy play and boxed areas of city, Treyarch decided to create *Grand Theft Spider-Man*. A huge, go-anywhere New York, modelled on the real thing. Proper traffic and pedestrians. Crimes and sub-missions popping up all over the map. It was an unspeakably risky move. Any problems with enlarging the game's scope would put the game's super-critical release date at risk, and bring the four accountants of the apocalypse clattering in.

Treyarch needed advice. So they swung by the office of friendly neighbourhood coders Luxoflux, who were busily recreating a large chunk of another city – Los Angeles itself – for their own *True Crime: Streets of LA*.

"TREYARCH CREATED A HUGE, GO-ANYWHERE NEW YORK MODELLED ON THE REAL THING"

"We met with Luxoflux several times," says Gregory. "They pointed us in the right direction, warned us away from the biggest pitfalls. But the biggest benefit was just knowing it could be done. It was a solved problem. Rather than wasting precious months only to find out it was all in vain, we knew if we worked at it, it would pay off." And the most important bit of advice from Luxoflux? "They told us that we'd better start yesterday."

A half-dozen team members were packed straight off to The Big Apple for a week of photographing streets and buildings. City planning maps were pored over to determine where commercial, industrial, and residential areas would lie. Books were bought and the internet dredged for information. "I'm not sure we can tally up all the hours we spent researching New York," says Gregory. "We wanted our version to really look like it does in real life. Changes along the way were mainly on the technical side: how to fit it all in and how to make it run faster."

An entire team of environment modellers

CITY LIMIT



"Once we'd built a city, we did think about having Spidey visit Tokyo, or San Francisco, or downtown LA," says Gregory. "And a very good friend of mine, who lives in Ottawa, asked me to put in a special level… where Spider-Man goes to visit Ottawa." Spider-Man 3, anyone?

△ Making pizza deliveries in the Spidey suit? What a giveaway.

△ Stadium boss battle hecticness in full effect. Men in bad tan suits must diiiiiie!

△ And that's why they call him the Rhino. He's tough, and you don't want to be on the wrong end of that horn.

worked flat-out on building NYC, each individual working on one of around 100 small strips of the virtual city. The total area of map ended up at around 12 square kilometres, so it's understandable when Gregory says that "the difficulty lay in filling it up with enough interesting stuff." Still, the sheer amount of space meant the artists had room to drop in their own little touches, including Gregory's favourite, a working timepiece in one downtown area which shows the actual hour based on Gamecube's internal clock.

The good news for Treyarch was that, just as the free-roaming city was stacking up, Spidey fans were demanding exactly what they were building. "Everyone was clamouring for open gameplay," says Gregory. "And we were in the middle of developing it. It really encouraged us that we were on the right track. We couldn't reveal anything, of course, but inside we were like, 'Hang on! It's coming!'"

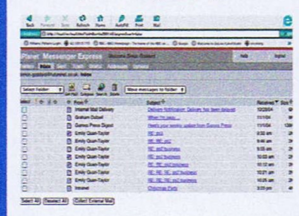
"IF A GAME IDEA FITS WITH THE MOVIE, GREAT; IF NOT, WE MAKE OUR OWN BITS OF PLOT"

Spider-Man 2 didn't just win everyone over with a great big city, though. In terms of actual play, it expertly slid you into Spidey's sweaty sock-shoes for the best movie moments (pummelling Doc Ock, web-swinging from the tallest buildings in town, the slow-mo Spidey Sense, delivering pizzas) while giving you a Manhattan-full of entertaining distractions, from pow-ing and bam-ing bank robbers to rescuing some poor kid's lost balloon. It worked because Treyarch wrapped the movie around the mission ideas, rather than the other way around.

"We always start off with a brainstorming session," says Gregory. "What do we want to do? What are going to be the best and most challenging missions? What's going to be *fun*? Then we write our story around it. If a game idea fits with the movie, great; if not, we make our own bits of story. If you try to force all the interesting bits of plot to work in gameplay terms, it'll never happen. Even though the Spider-Man movies are awesome and full of cool bits, we weren't going to use the license as a crutch."

Tobey Maguire's voice was there to make Spidey sound cool (if annoyingly repetitive); Treyarch's artists were there to make him look good, too. Eschewing motion capture, Treyarch animated Spider-Man completely by hand, with a

POST



With great licenses come great responsibility. So it's gratifying for Gregory that his post-Spider-Man 2 inbox was routinely filling up with happy emails from grateful gamers, slapping him on the cyber-back. "But we also get a lot of written letters from Europe," he says. "It must be some weird cultural thing. Still, it's nice to put them up on the wall."

SPIDEY SENSE

"Who am I? I'm Spider-Man," muttered bewitched gamers playing *Spider-Man 2*. Here's why.



1 There's no "canned animation", as Gregory puts it. The web-swinging physics are calculated as you go, so if you get enough speed up you can do your tummy in by swinging 360° or slingshotting around a building.



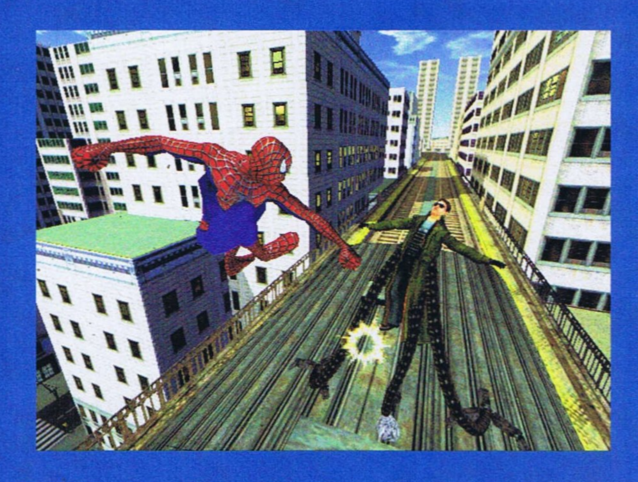
2 The game's brain is churning away non-stop to make swinging seem 'natural' to you. You don't need to point straight at a building before squirting your stickiness – the engine intelligently picks the right point.



3 The city *looks* authentic, and was based on the real thing, but the buildings are crammed much closer together than the real NYC, ensuring that you can glide from one to the other without creating Spidey pavement pancake.



4 The amount of work that went into making everything 'Spidey-friendly' was colossal. There are no 'fake' walls, ceilings, columns or slabs of scenery – almost everything you see is crawlable and webbable.





team of four animators creating thousands of frames of movement. "It's not like a sports game where you're used to seeing the way players move," Gregory reckons. "Spider-Man is a comic-book hero and highly stylised, so we needed to recreate that hyper-dynamic look through hand-animation. That enabled us to put in little touches like making Spidey leap off his web differently depending on whether you were coming off facing left or right, up or down. All to add to that subconscious feeling of actually *being* Spider-Man."

Working late nights with mass Italian and Chinese meals ("and, on special days, ribs", says Gregory, smacking his lips), the team, sworn to secrecy about many of the game's features in order to avoid giving away vital bits of movie plotline, worked towards that super-critical deadline, catching innumerable bugs just like flies. There were difficult decisions to make along the way. "The nastiest moments are when you have to cut stuff," says Gregory. "People on the team were very, very passionate about the game; they really put their hearts and souls into it. But you have to maintain quality, so things sometimes get the chop."

And then, almost from nowhere, the Spidey-head piñata was ready to be smashed open. "We were under a ton of pressure, trying to stabilise everything and get it as bug-free and bullet-proof as possible," says Gregory. "We'd had our heads down for so long, and then it was like we looked up, and… we were done. We were ready to go. It was such a shock, a lot of us were just standing there dumbfounded, saying 'Are you sure? Are you *sure*?'"

Like most developers, Gregory admits it's easy to get sick of a game you're working on. But at the end of *Spider-Man 2*, he still felt on top of the world. "Throughout the entire project and after I was still having fun playing it," he says. "Climbing up to the top of the tallest building, having a look around, then jumping off and swinging down – no other game gives you this experience, no other game gives you that visceral 'Wow!'. That's the experience I like best."

"WE NEEDED TO RECREATE THAT HYPER-DYNAMIC LOOK THROUGH HAND ANIMATION"

ENDGAME



A massive 'wrap party' marked Spider-Man 2*'s completion. "It's always fun," says Gregory. "We're a pretty big company, so it's great to see everyone in a social setting and meet the spouses." He also tells us he was 'ripped' on the final day of development – he doesn't mean it literally, we hope.*







Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles.

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide – it's got:

- **The 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **We tell you which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you?..**
- **A brief description of the game, so if you don't have that issue you can find out the most important points about it.**
- **Highlighted games, with a little more detail. As games join the list, the highlights will change!**



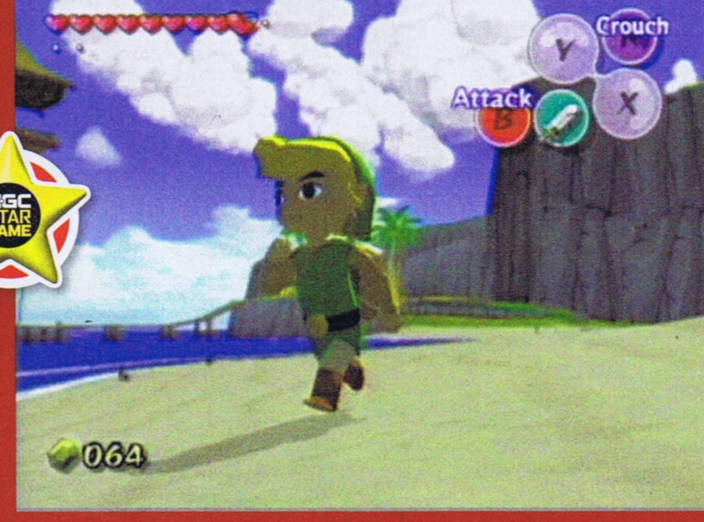
1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close to 'art' as 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME













2 METROID PRIME 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible, and there's no slow down at all, despite the fact that the environments are huge and detailed. The action's varied, with a broad range of bosses, and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play – on any system.

NGC STAR GAME







3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story. Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. You need one of those…

NGC STAR GAME





4 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

93





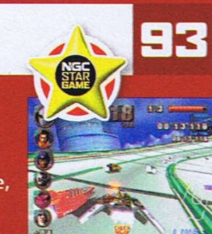
NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pickup boxes, weapons from slippy bananas to green shells and giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lotta fun.



5 F-ZERO GX

93



NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

Blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep the pace up without getting the frame rate jitters. You will never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would've been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



6 PIKMIN 2

92





NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has proved less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to earth for a longer session of collecting 'treasure'. They've got two new types of Pikmin to help them out, too. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original.



7 SOUL CALIBUR 2

92



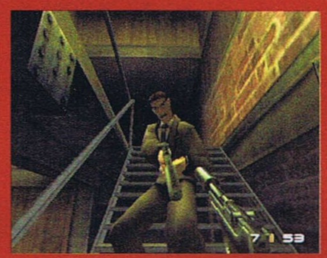
NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent fast-paced fighting. Weapon Master mode is your key to unlocking the three hidden characters – but the real star of the show's not hidden! For the Gamecube version, Namco have dropped in Link, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.

8 TIMESPLITTERS 2

91





NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate and you'll wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. And you *will* love every minute. The multiplayer's the icing on the cake.



9 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

All your Nintendo favourites (and a few Nin-non-entities) get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have massive amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.

10 HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE

91





NINTENDO ■ NGC/91

Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change gradually… Despite a new 'chapter' structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals, but the rural life is habit-forming and you'll keep returning to do a bit of milking…

TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2
Cute-looking turn-based strategy, with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE
Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep returning to.



3 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA
An RPG with puzzle and platform elements starring our two top plumbers.

4 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
One of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

5 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever.

6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em into battle – but still the most entertaining RPG out there…

7 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
Nicks the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.

8 METROID FUSION/ZERO MISSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games. A sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing difficulty level.

9 HARVEST MOON
A slow burner, *HM: Friends of Mineral Town* is a farming/charming sim to die for. It'll last you months.

10 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player.

NGC TOP 100

The best Gamecube games around

11 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN — 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82

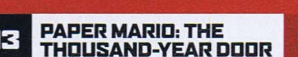
Bald barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly – but how else you go about it is up to you, because this is freeform gaming at its finest.



12 PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME — 91

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/90

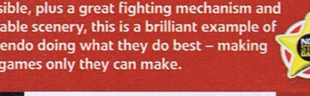
Ubi Soft show other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey… but really, it all reeks of quality. Superb.

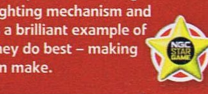


13 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

With Mario's papery ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only they can make.

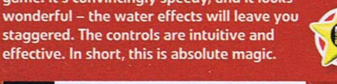




14 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

A few tiny frame rate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy, and it looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is absolute magic.

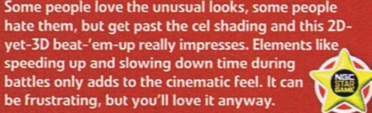




15 VIEWTIFUL JOE — 90

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Some people love the unusual looks, some people hate them, but get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up really impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only adds to the cinematic feel. It can be frustrating, but you'll love it anyway.



16 SECOND SIGHT — 90

CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97

Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. The levels are tightly designed, offering scope for replay, while its distinctive style and original touches make it one of the most memorable games we've played in years.



17 METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES — 90

KONAMI ■ NGC/91

Superb stealth action and a great story combine with revamped graphics to make this old PlayStation title blossom on Gamecube. The voice acting and music are superb. The only problems are the long, unskippable cut-scenes, the short length and possibly too many bosses. But we're just picky.

18 BURNOUT 2 — 90

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great, it's wonderfully fast, and then there are the crashes… When you've had fun roaring round the streets, Crash mode gives you the opportunity to beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.

19 WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAMES — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/97

A quickfire succession of five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. It's wholeheartedly original, outlandishly quirky and good fun. What's more, it handicaps experienced players so even your nan can play on an equal footing.

20 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 1&2 — 90

ATARI ■ NGC/78

This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, plenty of numbers and bashing defenceless crates and snatching items. Two things to note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one of *those*. 2) We've had reports of third-party memory cards corrupting with this. As you'll spend *months* building up your character, don't risk it.

21 1080° AVALANCHE — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trialling modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off your time for months.



22 ANIMAL CROSSING — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/98

Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full 'teenaged Dr Moreau' experience can be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow it's horribly addictive, as you improve your house, fill the museum and get a life.

23 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS — 90

ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll devour vast chunks of your life," our RPG fanatic assures us. The spaces in between the meat of your quest (for some missing moonstones) are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping. Looks dated now.



24 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 — 90

SCI ■ NGC/86

Even better than the last *CDS*, but again very brown and set during the first Gulf war. There's a new aspect to this one: you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroics and more opportunity for you to 'get to know' your squad members.



TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Yes, it's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC
Can't touch *Sunshine*, but it's entertaining and looks 'the bomb'.

WARIO WORLD
Not that tough to beat, admittedly, but still bags of fun.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching crashes.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 WORMS 3D — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/87

You know the score. You have four worms. Your worms must kill other worms. The special weapons are as crazy as ever (Sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade). The only real difference is, it's now in 3D, which will affect your strategies. For the better. A multiplayer blast.

26 ETERNAL DARKNESS — 89

NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

Lovecraftian horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls, and when that drops to the bottom… Let's just say you'll be glad your mind has gone. There are a few weaknesses in the combat, but it's nearly perfect otherwise.

27 RESIDENT EVIL — 89

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore. Then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

28 SPLINTER CELL — 89

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Ageing special agent Sam Fisher's first outing. Sam stealths his way round the realistically gritty Clanciverse with various high-tech, high-improbability gadgets like sticky bombs and camera disruptors at his disposal. It's your usual silent-man-takes-on-terrorists fare, but done with flair.

29 CONFLICT DESERT STORM — 89

SCI ■ NGC/80

Your four-man squad ventures into the Arabian desert to fight the first Gulf War, destroying key installations and taking out Scud missiles prior to launch. It's good warmongering fun, if a little basic. A few more missions would've helped. The multiplayer, however, is great fun for four people.

30 SSX3 — 89

EA ■ NGC/87

Snowboard your way around one gigantic mountain, entering races or competing to show off your tricks. Complete all three peaks on the mountain and you'll get the opportunity to spend 15-30 minutes sliding and tricking your way down the whole thing. The frame rate can be glitchy, and it's not *quite* as free roaming as it seems at first glance, but it's ultimately a superb, stunty, downhill racer.

31 DONKEY KONGA — 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer's worth the expense.

32 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 — 88

EA ■ NGC/98

This is a big game. There are probably lost tribes in there if you play for long enough – but you won't see them if you have other interests, like a job or social life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

33 LUIGI'S MANSION — 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's TOO SHORT. That apart, his escapades in his newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. The man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

34 SUPER MONKEY BALL — 88

ATARI ■ NGC/67

The first ingenious update of old classic *Marble Madness*, with encapsulated monkeys rolling around bizarre landscapes collecting bananas. Minigames include obvious ballgames like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

35 NBA STREET V2 — 88

EA ■ NGC/84

You don't need a serious basketball sim – this one is stacks of fun, and unless those real-life stats are really vital to your enjoyment of a game, *NBA Street's* got everything you need. Three-on-three action, stunt combos and special moves, all crammed into a fast-moving game.

36 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER — 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Without a doubt the best Star Wars game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note: the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

37 SSX TRICKY — 87

EA ■ NGC/69

Not as vast as its sequel, *Tricky* was a snowboarding revelation nonetheless, bringing a funky soundtrack and an outrageous cast of characters to the slopes. The emphasis is on pulling tricks as much as it is going quickly, so you'd better make sure you're as stylish as you are speedy.

38 MADDEN NFL 2005 — 87

EA ■ NGC/99

The main change in this bitterly tough latest instalment in the franchise is Hit Stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that and a few tweaks to defensive plays and Franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual for Madden.

39 DEF JAM VENDETTA — 87

MAJESCO ■ NGC/82

All your favourite rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Starting as a mere rookie, fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and play the part of your girlfriend as she catfights with other lissome lovelies. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

40 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67

Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it! – but is such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds and stunts, a range of locations… Come on, this is Tony Hawk. Before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from fight kings Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types pounding each other's faces in.

VIEWTIFUL JOE
The only one-player beat-'em-up in our top five. Stunning.

DEF JAM VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

MK DEADLY ALLIANCE
"Mind if I remove your spleen?" "Ooh, go on – finish me."

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

TIME-SPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks great and lacks the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel.

XIII
Euro-shooter with comic-book looks and very serious violence.

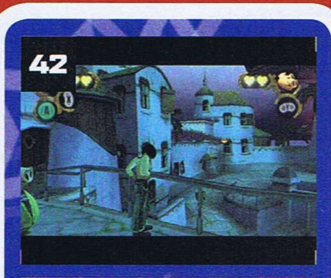
IKARUGA
A pure arcade shooter that's tougher than most.

41 LOST KINGDOMS 2 — 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81

Lovely looking card-based RPG – not quite up to *Phantasy Star's* standards, but statophiles are going to love building their decks and crunching numbers. Essentially it's a string of bite-sized gaming morsels that you can chomp away at will, putting it down and returning to it later with ease.

42 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL — 86



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/90

Wonderful-looking action adventure with you as green-lipped photographer Jade, snapping rare animals for science and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning, and the speech, music and effects all make the grade too. Even the minigames are fun in their own right. The world is huge and detailed, although the slightly easy difficulty level might mean it won't last as long as you'd like.

43 FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/91

For up to four players – but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this stupidly expensive if you're to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be random and the players' shared 'air bubble' can be claustrophobic, but all in all this is a good looking, ambitious attempt at a multiplayer RPG.

44 WARIO WORLD — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/83

Punching, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N)! The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game, and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

45 BURNOUT — 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

Absolutely killer racer in its day that was improved on massively by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth frame rate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2* because it's got all that and so much more. Not that you'd be unhappy with this, far from it!

46 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG — 86

SEGA ■ NGC/87

Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese, platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

47 PIKMIN — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Only Shigsy could've come up with a real-time-strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth was a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. And it looked as wonderful as it played. Just too short.

48 LOST KINGDOMS — 86

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

The first *Lost Kingdoms* is inferior to its sequel – but only slightly. It's a card-based RPG, with all the deck-building activity you can expect, wrapped up in some lush fantasy landscapes. If you enjoy repeated fighting and number crunching, and want something more accessible than *PSOIII*, try it.

49 XIII — 86

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/88

Unusual graphics – cel shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (sequences of images, guns that literally go 'bam') set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace as you set about solving the conspiracy and recovering your memory.

50 NFL 2K3 — 86

ATARI ■ NGC/79

Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing effectively together. However, the enormous Franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American Football, if a tad out-of-date.

51 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING — 86

EA ■ NGC/87

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (most notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom.

52 NBA LIVE 2004 — 86

EA ■ NGC/88

Under the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats and facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved, and you've more offensive options. It's soulless but slick.

53 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/78

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Fab cut-scenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old Resi atmosphere. A coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere…

54 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR — 85

NINTENDO ■ NGC/95

For a Mario game, there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses. It's just not as whacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

55 IKARUGA — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/80

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the Easy difficulty. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to shoot the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all.

56 NBA 2K3 — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/79

Because of its age the player rosters and stadia aren't completely up-to-date, but this plays a good, nice-looking game of b-ball. The shooting angles can be dodgy sometimes and the camera's a bit swingy, so we'd probably go for one of the more recent titles (*NBA Street V2* or *NBA Live 2004*) if we had a choice.

NGC TOP 100

The best Gamecube games around

57 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 — 85

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75

The last title in the Pro Skater series, and cynics might say it's just an update. However, the controls were easy to learn, the system is open-ended and it's all very enjoyable, so if you want more of the same, this is great fun. By this point the series was looking dated, but the old magic was still there.

58 FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 — 85

EA ■ NGC/87

The best footie sim on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players and licensed teams and stadia. The free kick system's been tweaked, and corner-taking's menu-driven. So, a single game or a whole career? It's all here.

59 EXTREME G3 — 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

An underrated gem, this. It's very fast, the tracks are huge, sprawling and well-designed, and you'll find some very cunning uses for the inventive weapons you acquire. The only down side is that it's a bit soulless. The multiplayer's also nowhere near as good as it could – or should – have been.

60 SPIDER-MAN 2 — 84

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96

How long have we been waiting for a game that actually makes us feel like a superhero? Well, it's here! Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll actually feel the joy of doing whatever a spider can. It's not detailed, and some of the quests and missions get samey, but still… that swinging!

61 JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH — 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Mega City One comes to life. Sadly, it's not an especially *long* life, but while it lasts you get to play as ol' chinny himself, solving crimes, nailing perps and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot-on. Apart from the length, the fiddly controls are the other letdown.

62 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 — 84

EA ■ NGC/86

The game that introduced the ability to create your own character to the Woods series. Apart from that and seven extra courses and some new modes (such as World Tour and PGA Tour) this is essentially the same as *2003*. And now *2005's* out, you might not want to bother with either of the earlier titles…

63 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM — 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The Pokémon series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters! Aww. Really, though, it's an awful lot of fighting, and you'll need a GBA Pokémon title to get the most out of the Colosseum mode.

64 TALES OF SYMPHONIA — 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

A 'traditional' RPG, and good looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the specific locations you enter throughout the adventure are stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will irritate, though.

65 RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC — 84

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78

Rayman manages to create a fun platformer, despite his inability to add anything new to the genre. It's bright, it's solid, and it's got some enjoyable minigames. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right. When you've played all the Mario you can handle, give Ray a go.

66 ISS2 — 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

Once upon a time, this series was untouchable, but the FIFA games have ramped up their quality while the GC *ISS* seemed much slower than its predecessors and your players had huge turning circles. *ISS2* is a great game, there's no doubt about that, but we expected so much more of it.

67 FIFA FOOTBALL 2003 — 83

EA ■ NGC/75

After years of unfavourable comparisons to the Pro Evo games, FIFA gets a massive overhaul. It flows pleasingly, your players have a wide range of lobs, passes and through balls, and the camera's great. *FIFA 2004* is pretty much the same with more recent rosters – buy one or the other, but not both.

68 ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE — 83



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88

Star Wars – it's about screaming TIE fighters, speeder bike battles and taking on Star Destroyers. It's not about poncing around on foot. So, whether you're playing through Luke Skywalker's storyline or Wedge Antilles', one thing is true: the on-foot sections ruin the rest of it. Which is a huge disappointment, because it looks and sounds near-perfect, and the two-player version of *Rogue Leader* absolutely *rules*.

69 SERIOUS SAM NEXT ENCOUNTER — 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

Don't be fooled by the name, this is very silly indeed. For a mere £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly-coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. Okay, the killing can get a bit relentless, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's the man. Never mind the depth, feel the speed!

70 FREEDOM FIGHTERS — 83

IO ■ NGC/86

Less serious than the *Desert Storm* series, this squad-based third-person shooter is nonetheless hugely enjoyable and involves a decent degree of strategy. Forget rubbish like bullet trajectories and get your plumber and his team out on the streets of Noo Yoik to take on the invading Russians.

71 TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2 — 82

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100

Tony Hawk rumbles on. This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode features a lot of Bam Margera. Some bits don't belong in a skateboard game, like driving vehicles and walking. Those bits are rubbish. The rest is great, and includes chunks of the first three games – with timer!

72 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82

ATARI ■ NGC/78

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys want you dead. And they probably carry guns. Inside balls (WHERE A MONKEY BELONGS!), the little creatures are a delight. *SMB2* offers you a wide array of minigames and over 100 levels to roll your imprisoned simian around.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own Gamecube itself.

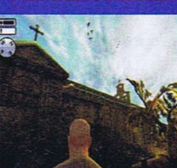
METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure. Again.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

LOST KINGDOMS II
Polished RPG with card collecting elements. Neat.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the *'Splitters 2* team.

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Another Nintendo exclusive that never fails to entertain.

SPLINTER CELL
Captivating stealth-laced adventure from the hand of Tom Clancy.

73 METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM — 82

VIVENDI ■ NGC/88

Hard – like Ray Winstone in a steel top hat. This robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the difficult training level. The enemies are extremely resilient and have superb AI, so you need to be accurate and quick. The camera can be awkward, and landscape hazards (eg water is instantly fatal) can be unfairly harsh.

74 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 — 82

EA ■ NGC/75

Not as leviathan as either *2004* or *2005* (there's no create-a-golfer feature, for one thing), there's still a whole lotta golf and a very dodgy soundtrack in this offering. It was the first game to use the stick rather than the power meter for swinging the club, which was a great innovation.

75 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III CARD REV. — 82

SEGA ■ NGC/94

A new idea for PSO – card-based battling. Following on from the events in *PSO 1&2*, you now have to choose a side (Arkz or Heroside) and do battle by rolling dice and selecting cards. You really need to be familiar with PSO to get the most out of it, and you'll also require an elusive broadband adaptor…

76 THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT — 82

EA ■ NGC/89

Having spent their previous game imprisoned within the four walls of their home, this one sees your virtual people playthings freed from their luxury prison as you send them out to work. It's still rather ugly, and it doesn't sound too great, but it will last you a very long time.

77 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA OOT MASTER QUEST — 81

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Free with *Wind Waker*! You may have played this beauty back in the days of the N64 version, and it still looks pretty much the same, although the Master Quest version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles. Forget the ropy graphics and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

78 AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72

Top-class roller skating sim that's a genuine extreme sports alternative to the Tony Hawk's series. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means you can pull off moves like handstands and swinging round lampposts. There's even a Career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is rubbish and the graphics are a bit bland. Still, the frame-rate is smooth.

79 THE SIMS — 81

EA ■ NGC/79

Life, Jim, but not as we know it. Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would – leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. Like *Animal Crossing*, there's no point to it, but that's life for you: meaningless, but you want to keep doing it.

80 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81

EA ■ NGC/76

Four authentic race seasons in one tidy package! Makes a difference from that 'yearly update' malarkey, eh? What's more, the first year's is 1999, when Ferrari weren't guaranteed to win everything. It's a good, sensible, deep Formula 1 sim. The down side is, it's not exactly a barrel of laughs…

81 PAC-MAN VS 80



NAMCO ■ NGC/90

This tiny gem is free – but only when you buy another, inferior full-priced title (*R: Racing Evolution*). Not so good. While *Pac-Man Vs* isn't the most complex of titles, and the graphics and sound aren't anything special, the four-player mechanic works incredibly well. Think of it as a lightweight trifle to have fun with between 'serious' gaming sessions. Note: you'll need a Game Boy and link cable to play it properly.

82 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY 80



EA ■ NGC/99

More fighting style/ More stylin' fight/ If only they'd/ Got the frame rate right.
Yes, this is actually much better than *Def Jam Vendetta*, with a great fighting system and brilliant have-a-go crowds, but the jerkiness (graphical scratching..?) ruins it.

83 NHL 2005 80



EA ■ NGC/99

Plays a slick game of hockey that'll restore the faith of anyone who invested in last year's sluggish, jerky version. If you genuinely dislike the sport, you won't be convinced. But as a videogame, hockey works well enough to hurdle a few transatlantic sporting barriers – it's quick, easy to learn and high scoring.

84 MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier MKs, although it's far too easy to get an 'infinite' by button mashing. The lack of ring outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

85 BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81

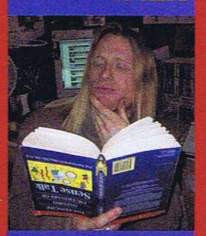
A traditional sort of RPG (no cards!) based on a PC series. Endlessly battling Kobolds and their ilk can grow tedious, but you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. Technically, however, it's poor. It's a lazy port from PS2, with bad slowdown and a very jittery frame rate when the screen is full.

86 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/87

After a succession of stinkers, the Simpsons take a tip from GTA and set about stealing cars, taking on missions and even dishing out a bit of violence. There are even racing and item-locating side missions. Original it isn't. But funny it is! As long as you don't expect depth, you'll have fun with this.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



PUB SCENARIO

…so the guy says to the well-built, sporty looking lady, "can you look after my pint please?" But when he gets back from the toilet, his drink now smells just like chuff, so he enquires to the lady, "Hey! You fart in my Whitbread?" She replies, "No, Tessa Sanderson"

BLEACH BREATH

What's it called when you instinctively blow on food you've dropped? Presumably it's to clean and disinfect any germs but thinking about it, there's probably more germs in your blow.

SPORT ETIQUETTE

The most important thing to remember with being competitive, is that it's not the taking part that counts, it's the winning. *Always* the winning.

READER SENSE

"You drink a beer and you are fed up with the taste so you eat peanuts. Peanuts are sweet and salty, strong and tender, like a woman."
Jean Claude Van Damme
(Mr Van Damme appears to be on a 'slightly different page' to the rest of us – PE)

Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense-spewing Art monkey? More than likely! So go on, mess with his lank-haired swede, and send 'em in . The best get printed, and if you're really lucky, he may send you one of his roadkill baguettes.

Send them to him at paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

87 MARIO PARTY 5 80

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

Ain't no party like a Mario Party. Except all the other parties in the series. This console-based boardgame is one of the best yet, but is still really only good as a multiplayer game. The boardgame bits are a little slow and dull, but the minigames – popping other players' inner tubes, mech fights – are hilarious.

88 DIE HARD VENDETTA 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/74

WARNING: Do not play this in earshot of old people. We're sure The Vest never swore quite like this. However, he did enjoy a fair bit of gunplay, excellent set-pieces and cheesy dialogue. This has plenty of all three, all hampered by cumbersome controls and frustrating sections. Yippee-kay-ay, melon farmer.

89 POOL PARADISE 80

IGNITION ■ NGC/92

Not just UK pool – poke your cue at eight-ball, nine-ball and stunt tables too, if that's what fills your triangle. Using the analogue stick to power your cue is a nice touch, and darts and *Dropzone* feature as minigames. Earth shattering? No. But it's all solid and playable, as you'd expect.

90 PUYO POP FEVER 80

SEGA ■ NGC/91

Puyo Pop: if you've never heard of it, you must have started gaming all of a week ago. It's quite simple: match coloured blobs that drop from the top of the screen and – hey presto! – they disappear. How radical is that? Two-player's a whole lot more fun than you'd think, too.

91 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 79

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88

The timer's well and truly gone and the Birdman's not as visible as he was either – now you're playing as your own created skater. The freedom to explore, and the way you improve your stats through practice, are welcome additions. The on-foot and driving sections are not. It *mostly* works…

92 NFL STREET 79

EA ■ NGC/90

American Football isn't quite brought to the masses by *NFL Street*. Even though the strategy's dumbed down it's still very stoppy-starty and so can be slightly drawn-out. We'd also have liked a custom play editor or a whacky training mode to help players get to grips with the basic plays.

93 HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN 79

EA ■ NGC/95

A Potter title that actually works pretty well as a game! Whatever next? The way you use the differing skills of Harry, Ron and Hermione to solve problems adds interest to a (we're being kind here) rather thin storyline. The controls are a bit iffy, but the atmosphere's spot-on. Not just for Potter fans.

94 BEACH SPIKERS 79

ATARI ■ NGC/72

Not to everyone's taste – although developers AM2 have at least abandoned the 'jigglies' and concentrated on making a proper sports sim. You'll need lightning-quick reactions and good team control to succeed. Its single-player appeal is limited, so you'll need to play with friends to get the most from it.

95 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO 79

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Enormous depth and an avalanche of play modes give the game longevity – Versus mode will last you for ages – but it doesn't work well with the GC's joypad (specials on the C-stick? Cheapness abounds!) and so you'll really need to shell out for an arcade stick. It's pretty ugly too.

96 DAKAR 2 79

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

Two problems with this: it's basically one big time trial (and you can find a Time Trial mode in any racing game) and there aren't any real opponents. The handling of your vehicle and the varied courses between Paris and Dakar make up for it. A fun drive, just not a very competitive one.

97 NBA COURTSIDE 2002 79

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

There's a wealth of basketball games available for your Gamecube, and this is far from the worst, with all the passing, dunking and other ball-based moves you could ask for. However, it's not the best or most recent either. *NBA Street V2* or *NBA Live 2004* would be our preferred choices.

98 NHL HITZ 20-02 79

MIDWAY ■ NGC/67

Ice hockey's probably the most Brit-friendly of North American sports – no slowing down, fewer strange-seeming terms to get used to – and this is a fast, slick game. *NHL 2005* is more recent and slightly better, but if you can't get that, *NHL Hitz 20-02* is going to be your next best ice hockey option.

99 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 79

EA ■ NGC/75

Decent boxer. Slightly better than – and very different from – *Rocky*. The camera's really dynamic, and the control system can feel disorientating at first. There are plenty of modes, and you can build your own boxer to punch his way through Career mode. Looks rather nice, too.

100 SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 78

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/97

Sam Fisher returns for more spying, sniping and skulking around in the dark – but his first adventure was far superior. The quality of the conversion's not great and some serious gameplay flaws from the Xbox original haven't been addressed, but we kept coming back. Until the glitchy last level, anyway.





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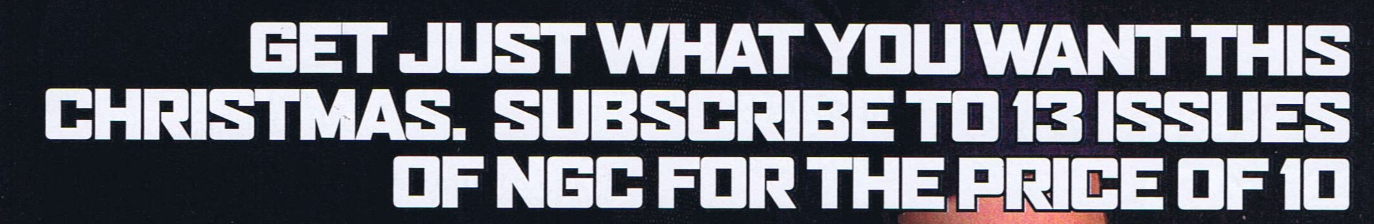
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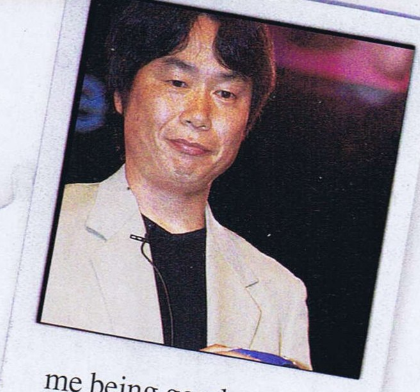
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me being good.

Dear Father Christmas

i have been a very good boy this year i have. I was very nice to MR Reginald Fils-Aime even when he shouted so loud that my ears made the noise of an alarm clock. i didn't finish SUPER MARIO 128 but no-one really expects me to any more. i'm making a new zelda that the internet doesn't hate. i smiled all the time even when little children with press passes made me talk about Kid Icarus AGAIN. but i think you know all this already. can you see if i'm being good even when i'm in the toilet?

HERE IS WHAT I WANT FOR XMAS!

1. a shiny red cape with **SUPER SHIGERU** written on the back in gold letters for my E3 2005 appearance AND a map because i need to find out where YOUROPE is because i think it will be a big important market for nintendo soon AND an ipod AND an idea for a new character because ive run out of different-sized Marios after Luigi and Wario and Waluigi (please supply concept sketches, accompanying descriptive notes, marketing suggestions, et cetera).

2. a secretary so i can go home before 1.30 o'clock in the morning one day a month AND a tshirt that says my name is mr shigeru miyamoto because people keep calling me shigsy or shiggy or moto or mote-dawg AND a pony AND a San Francisco 49ers baseball bat to replace the one that Mr Hiroshi Yamauchi broke while smashing it over my back after i told him SUPER MARIO 128 would be delayed again AND a yu-Gi-Oh! booster pack.

3. a NINTENDO DS because Mr Hiroshi Yamauchi won't let me touch one because he says i must finish my games first AND the 411 album AND a proper marketing department AND the songbook that's called 'Banjo your way to Scissor Sisters and 57 other Great Artists!' AND a new banjo to replace the one that Mr Hiroshi Yamauchi broke while smashing it over my back after i told him SUPER MARIO 128 would be delayed again again AND a girlfriend.

4. metroid prime 2: echoes to be number one in the charts pleeeease AND hair like Brad Pitt or even jennifer aniston AND Mr Hiroshi Yamauchi has asked me to ask you if you can give us positive Q1 2005 sales numbers that match or exceed the expectations outlined in our press conference last year AND a balloon AND i want to be a popstar or do i have to ask jesus for that one?

I hope i get everything I want for Xmas!!! PS if you want an extra present to put in peoples stockings then Mr Hiroshi Yamauchi says we've got a warehouse full of KIRBY AIR RIDES you can have cheap.

love
Shigeru Miyamoto

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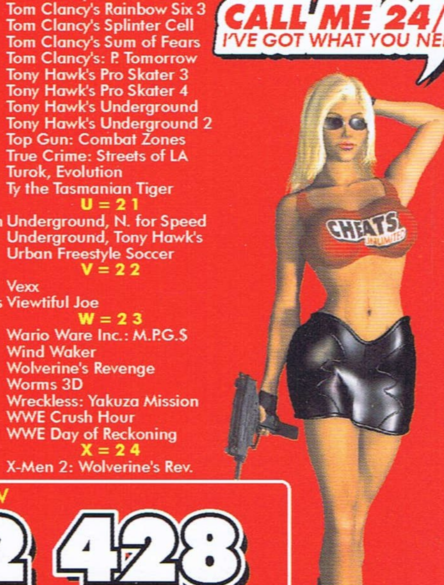
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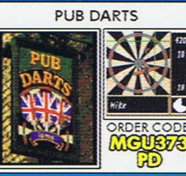
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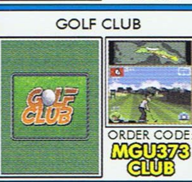



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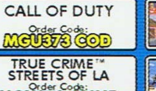
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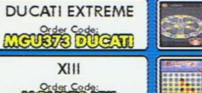
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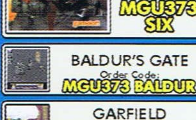
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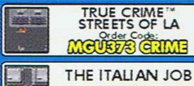
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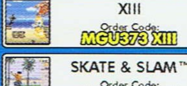
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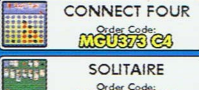
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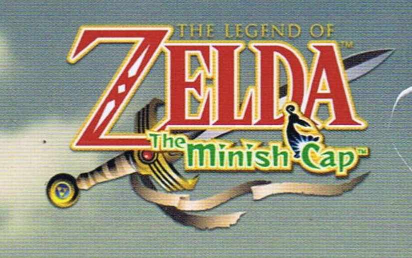
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